

Dragon's Bloodline

(竜の血脈)

Volume 03

The Dark Labyrinth

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Story Description:

A martial artist (42 years old, single) devoted himself and trained his skill with the sword and martial arts, but was involved in a large scale disaster, and saved many people before his life ended. Who would have thought that when he went to the world of the dead, a beautiful woman who introduced herself to be General Administrator would appear? He was told that it was possible to reincarnate into a world of swords and magic, and the man gained the powerful Gift [Dragon's Bloodline]. However, he reincarnated as a woman. Furthermore, a beautiful woman. In order for him to walk down the warrior's road to recover his symbol of being a man, he made a fresh start as a woman. Shall we go on an adventure? Let's begin!

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 35: The Crimson Swordmage

The city-state of Jaeburg, similar to Shashmeer, was a city that came into existence from trading magic stones and magic crystals produced in the labyrinth.

Only merchants and explorers visited it. Though foolish heroes would occasionally show up to try and bring down the Dragon, they would all die.

The Dark Labyrinth. The labyrinth's lord, Dark Dragon Valis.

A companion of Founder Leyte Anaia, it was the strongest existence on the continent. It was said that his power exceeded even a god's.

There was a toll to enter the city, but they were also questioned.

"Though I can't see you all as traders... are you explorers?"

His doubt wasn't that unreasonable. Hellhound aside, they were obviously children, which weren't usually explorers.

"No, but our Ojou said that she wanted to see the Dragon."

The guard looked amazed.

"Apart from Flying Dragons, it's rare to see Dragons. Moreover when you find them, it's usually instant death. Be as careful as possible."

They were heartless words, but they didn't think too much on it.

As for the town of Jaeburg, it was a city that overflowed with more strength than Shashmeer.

The large amount of people coming and going were clearly explorers. The capability of the city definitely surpassed Labyrinth City.

More than anything, there were many people with a large amount of magical power. Even if they appeared to be purely warriors, they were probably using body reinforcement magic.

They left the wagon and horses at an inn a guard told them about, heading to the guild. Rudolph was left in a guild stable for the exclusive

use of familiars. It would accompany them in the labyrinth.

When they opened the guild's doors, it looked like another world.

That was just a metaphor. The large amount of sketchy men and few sketchy women filled the area, paying attention to the newly entering group. Then, they froze.

Because the first one to enter was Ria.

Beautiful girls were seldom seen this far out. Her beauty had been increasingly polished from hatching from the egg.

Though for the vulgar men in this city, their eyes dazzled as though looking at a treasure.

Before they could head to the counter, a man appeared and stood in front of Ria.

“Ojou-chan, what are you doing in a place like this?”

He wore a single-mindedly vulgar and lustful expression.

Though Ria thought her age would cause these situations to not happen, in this case, her growth backfired on her.

“That’s irrelevant to you guys.”

Speaking from next to the person in front of Ria, a different man appeared.

Just about then, Ria didn’t have much patience left.

Gig and Carlos were starting to panic. On their barbaric journey, they’d come to understand Ria had become warlike.

Though, the warlike Gig was also the same.

“Hey bastards, you’re being nuisances to Anego...”

The delinquents seemed to not feel intimidated by Gig’s large build as he said that.

Maybe because they were paralyzed, or maybe they had some capability. Either reason was probably.

“An-chan could easily win with his high level, it’s fine to be reckless.”

Serge spoke to Carlos after using Identify, but it looked like he didn’t need to worry about the small fry.

“The heck’s with this kid!”

“You guys are level thirty-two and thirty-four right? Carlos An-chan is sixty seven ya know?”

Serge flourished his mage’s staff as he spoke. Proving he’d used Identify.

“Bring it on, bastard!”

“I’m comin’ for ya!”

“Don’t take out your weapons!”

Though a voice came from the counter, they didn’t stop.

After that, it was the standard development.

Carlos and Gig took on their opponents bare-handed, throwing them out of the guild.

“Phew, I’m happy I learned hand to hand combat from Ojou.”

“Definitely.”

The two high-fived each other.

Ria finally headed to register, but yet another person blocked her way.

A woman. No, maybe it was better to say a girl by her age?

Though she was probably older than Ria, she wore a brazen expression, looking like a seasoned explorer.

She had fiery short red hair, matching her red armor. She looked amused as she looked into Ria’s entirely black eyes.

“Not doing it huh, those guards of yours.”

Her appraising glance wasn’t unpleasant, she was a beautiful girl after all.

They weren’t guards, but rather a watchdog and an apprentice, but she

didn't particularly feel the need to correct her. Ria observed the girl in front of her.

A sword hung on her waist. She stood with her feet and shoulder length apart. Her hips were directly below her shoulders. Ria could see her considerable skill in swordsmanship.

Though it'd probably be obvious if Identify was used, Ria felt it was just as important to sense it from the person's atmosphere.

(Wonder if she's stronger than Carlos?)

"Is there anything else?"

Though she was interested in the beautiful young girl in front of her, she wanted to hurry up and register for now.

"Nah, those guys you had beat up just now were my henchmen."

Her eyes were blazing.

"If I left it like this, wouldn't I lose face?"

It was a self-serving excuse. Contrasting that, Ria held up two fingers.

"First, they meddled with me first. Second, knights don't cut women."

That was logical. However, logic didn't seem to work in this town.

No one tried to stop it. Rather, they just cheered it on. Carlos and Gig shared a glance at each other, but neither wanted to fight a young girl.

"What is important here in this town is face and strength. Leave out the whining, are we gonna fight?"

Ria looked around as she turned in a circle. Her eyes spoke it all. They were sparkling brilliantly.

She genuinely enjoyed this obligation.

On the other hand, Carlos and Gig could do nothing but nod.

"Alright. I'll be your opponent."

A little girl being her opponent was unexpected.

"You? If an Ojou-chan is going to be my opponent, my name as the

[Crimson Swordmage] Shizuna will trash through the dirt.”

“I don’t care.”

Towards the other person who introduced herself with two names, Ria stepped up briskly. Shizuna seemed unnerved by her casual movements.

Next thing she realized, she was within punching range.

Ria let out a fist. Shizuna brushed away the hand blocking her sight as it came closer.

Letting her hand be forced away, Ria rotated.

“Uah!”

Bringing her movement to the extreme, Shizuna immediately dropped herself down to dodge.

Ria looked down at Shizuna, who was now standing from her knees. Seeing the smile spread across her face, blood rushed to Shizuna’s head.

“Bring it on. Don’t hold back.”

Seeing how easily she went down like that, she hadn’t regained any of her face. Moreover, her opponent ridiculed her.

That was Shizuna’s misunderstanding.

Even among her comrades, only Carlos and Ria knew about it. About Ria’s bad habit.

Bringing down vigorous young people who misunderstand their own strength. People like that were abundant among Casalia Kingdom’s knights and soldiers.

In times like that, Ria gave a very good smile.

“It’s getting interesting.”

While Ria laughed more and more, they went outside of the guild. Lulu put a hand to her head and looked up at the sky.

A spectacle was beginning on the road in front of the guild.

Shizuna drew her sword and stepped up. Tinged with a red light, it was

a mithril magic sword.

“Nee-chan, that’s a good sword.”

Serge didn’t give any details. Defeating the level one hundred twenty-five Ogre King, and moreover getting stronger afterwards, he thought any other information would have been useless.

Besides, according to Identify, the sword’s ability should have no effect against Ria.

An audience was encircling the street, irresponsibly jeering the two on. However, no one gave Ria, who had just come to the town that day, a high appraisal.

As for Shizuna, who held two names, she had often been made light of due to her youth and appearance.

Beating down each person who did that, or crossing swords with them, her name had been improved in this town.

But all of her opponents till now only looked like they possessed skill. The same age as her at best, her height was made fun of by a girl just like her, something like that shouldn’t have happened.

“Draw your blade.”

I’m fine without it, Ria seemed to say with her manner, but she’d thought it poor manners to fight her bare-handed.

She drew her katana. The well-maintained blade shone beautifully under the sunlight.

Curved swords were unusual, but her standing pose was a bit cool. Shizuna’s face grew a bit cold.

“By the way, wielding weapons in a place filled with people like this, won’t we be arrested by the patrol?”

Though it was a bit late to ask, it was important.

“So long you don’t involve bystanders, even death is fine if both agree!”

A voice called out from the audience. Ria nodded with a smile.

There was no problem, then. She'd be able to entertain herself a lot.

"Come at me. I'll play with you."

Shizuna's face became dyed with indignation.

"Dieee!"

She suddenly rushed forward to strike with all her force.

Ria's Nagasone Kotetsu parried the blow.

The two's positions had changed.

"Come to think of it, I haven't introduced myself huh."

Ria smiled. However, it wasn't in mockery of her opponent.

"I am Ria. As for my other name..."

Still, it was a smile that enjoyed fighting.

"After defeating you, I'll take a bit to think about it."

Chapter 36: The Ladykiller

Ria didn't think about something like how to win.

She knew she was going to win. Her objective was how to give as disgraceful a defeat as possible.

Since coming to this world and becoming royalty, she'd done the opposite of repressing it.

Ria was a sadist.

The sword flashes were all either dodged or parried.

Exchanges like these even lasted for a few minutes.

Already, looking at the girl in front of her on the street, Shizuna no longer thought her a weak Ojou-san.

Despite continuing to regard herself like so until now, why hadn't she considered there being someone else like her?

Even the surrounding spectators, though Shizuna was one-sidedly attacking, they had noticed Ria hadn't been scratched by her even once.

There were too many people's eyes watching.

If this was a one on one duel in the wilderness, it would have been fine for her to call it a draw.

But with this many people watching, she, who had introduced herself with her nickname, could not afford to appear unsightly.

Something like her pride and vanity were one thing.

Another was her trump card, her magic sword.

"Warp."

With that word, the sword multiplied.

"Ah, that's the G[]rian Sword!" [1]

Serge, who'd been watching, shouted forcefully.

"You know it!? Serge!"

Carlos asked in voice of true admiration.

“That sword, or rather that bladed whip, is a hard weapon to handle. But with magic weapons, they can just move properly by being handled by a person’s magical power!”

“A whip blade huh. Certainly, if it wasn’t moved with magical power, it would be a lot to handle.”

Lulu’s tsukkomi was terribly calm.

Shizuna’s sword disconnected into segments, the blades attached to the whip attacking Ria from all sides.

However, Ria’s impression was a single word.

“Ridiculous.”

She forcefully stuck the blade closest to her. She loaded it with plenty magical power.

Then, interfering with the magical power used to manipulate the whip, Ria created an opening between the blades for her to attack.

Evasion, martial arts, combined with her flexibility and movement skills, she was able to easily evade.

The bladed whip returned back into its original form as a long sword. Unnaturally, Ria just shrugged her shoulders.

She just wouldn’t do something like that. Kill when it’s time to kill. Don’t needlessly torment someone. Ria was that kind of person.

However, when the opponent was a beautiful woman, furthermore a beautiful girl, it was a different story altogether.

Strong-minded and tsun beautiful girls were Ria’s favorites, after all.

And so, that bad habit of teasing kids one liked, was in Ria.

“What? You’re already finished?”

As for why Ria gave such a cheap provocation, it was so she could still hide her trump card. It was also Serge’s advice.

As expected, even though Shizuna's face distorted, her mouth turned into a smile.

"No way, I wouldn't use my trump card so easily."

She held up her sword. She was obviously tempering her magical power.

Then, she spoke a word with power.

"Blaze!"

The red light of the sword strengthened, producing flames.

Serge's Identify had found the magic sword's name, it was called the [Blazing Snake Sword].

The flames produced caused the damage that opponents sustained from it to be hard to recover from. Moreover, being able to move like a snake, it was a strong magic sword.

However, that was it.

Ria had the Gift of Heat Resistance. Moreover, by frequently practicing fire magic on their journey, it had increased to level nine.

Even with Lulu's strongest fire magic, she wouldn't be burned at all. The strength of the gift went to that extent. A magic sword of fire would likely have no effect on Ria.

However, Ria's Gift didn't work on the leather armor and clothes she wore.

"Warp."

The whip of fire attacked Ria exactly like a snake. Meanwhile, Ria sheathed her katana for now.

She didn't want to risk the flame's heat damaging the katana.

The whip's tip approached Ria's body. She grabbed it out of the air bare-handed.

In addition to Heat Resistance, she had the Strong Body Skill. Speaking in a more specific status change, it gave her an extremely high stamina.

Though the portion of armor that covered her wrist heated up, it was manufactured with what she got in Shashmeer, produced from the skin of the Hydra. There would be no problems even if it were at the level of a Fireball.

Grabbing the whip, she pulled the blades in one by one. Each time the distance shortened, the color of shock and panic appeared on Shizuna's face.

(It's good, that expression.)

Ria was smiling.

The two were at a hand's reach away from each other. Shizuna tried to somehow take back her sword, but it was impossible against Ria's magical power.

"Well, what'll you do now?"

Ria asked in a crooning tone that felt as though she'd wanted to sing.

"Monster..."

Shizuna muttered in a hoarse voice.

"That's rude. You're just weak."

Those words inflamed the dwindling embers of Shizuna's fighting spirit yet again.

She directly hit Ria's body with her supple leg's kick.

Daringly, Ria took it head on and didn't evade.

It was no good no matter what she did, perfectly crushing her confidence. It went to the extent that Ria didn't appear injured in the least.

Being severe, then immediately after showing just a slight bit of tenderness, women would fall by her hand. That was Ria's rule of thumb in her previous life.

"If you're finished, it's my turn now."

Being kicked another time, Ria went on the offense for the first time.

It took just one hit.

Slipping into her bosom, she struck her opponent in the pit of the stomach. Shizuna's legs trembled.

Together with the sound of the ground being struck, Shizuna's body flew away. She fell into the crowd.

She had held back sufficiently, but it was necessary for her to give moderate damage. Adjusting it was difficult.

She'd used a martial art technique to not penetrate her armor.

When Ria approached, the spectators quickly moved away. Though Shizuna, who had just been knocked onto her back, was desperately trying to get up, it looked like she'd been given just enough damage, causing only her upper body to be able to sit up.

Since Ria walked towards her with a smile that looked like she was easily dealing with someone, she was obviously afraid.

However, a hindrance appeared.

"Would you please pardon her with that?"

Dividing the crowd, a huge man showed up.

He was tall. He was also a bulky man, swaying back and forth. His physique was similar to Gig.

But he had neither the fangs nor horns like an Ogre. He was completely human.

"O-old man..."

Shizuna groaned. Though they didn't resemble each other at all, this man seemed to be Shizuna's father. They definitely shared their red hair color.

"It's Vargas..."

"It's Vargas of the [Thunder]..."

The surrounding spectators began to clamor. It appeared he was considerably famous.

Not being distracted by the noise, Ria observed Vargas.

Despite his bulky figure, his footwork wasn't dull.

"Anee-cha~n. Be careful, that guy's strong."

Serge's carefree warning reached her. In other words, he was still weaker than Ria.

"Well, will the father follow the daughter and be my opponent?"

She tried a cheap provocation. Honestly, she still wanted to fight a bit.

But Vargas shook his head.

"There's no reason to fight something I know I would lose."

With those words, the crowd became noisy.

"Oi, Vargas said..."

"Thunder admitted defeat..."

"That's just... what's with that girl..."

It was anticlimactic, but he could clearly measure the ability difference between himself and Ria. He had combat intuition.

Regardless of whether it developed into killing each other, she wanted to fight him once.

"Then I guess our duel ends here? Well, how about a compromise?"

Ria looked at the magic sword in her hand. It was quite a performance. If it weren't Ria, it would've been hard to fight against. Carlos or Gig would have been defeated.

"For now, I'll keep this sword for a while. If you rely on it too much, your fundamental skills won't improve."

"Eeh!"

Shizuna screamed, but that was probably the natural response, seeing as how valuable the sword was. Vargas didn't respond, probably in consent.

"I'll give it back after you raise your Swordplay Skill. After that..."

Compromising, Ria took Shizuna's shoulders, standing her up. Like a newborn fawn, her legs trembled.

"W-what..."

Shizuna's frightened lips were blocked by other lips.

With the tip of her tongue, Ria experienced the girl's lips. It was just a moment of contact.

Letting go of her, she fell to the ground with a small plop. A different kind of cheer from those that had been going on rose up from the spectators.

"Yuri came!"

Serge shouted with a strength that seemed to cause a nosebleed.

"Wha-, wha-, wha-"

Shizuna opened and closed her mouth like a goldfish. Seeing the expected reaction, Ria was pretty horny.

"Compared to being killed, that wasn't much."

Vargas had an extremely difficult expression on, but said nothing.

"You, you're interested in that!?"

Shizuna shouted with watery eyes. She understood her feelings. If a man snatched a kiss from Ria, she'd also want to cry.

But when she thought about that cute crying face, her sadism trumped her reason.

"I'm not interested in men. I prefer girls with a strong will like you. You can come at me whenever you want revenge, but when I win, we'll do something more amazing."

Ria smiled sadistically. Vargas made an even more intensely complicated face.

"Y-you idiot—! Stupid—! Die—!"

Basking in the infantile cries coming from Shizuna, Ria walked through

the guild's doors.

“So cool...”

“Dreamy...”

Voices like that arose from the spectating women, though there were a small number of them.

“That Shizuna, so easily...”

“Such a ladykiller...”

“Yeah, a ladykiller...”

Voices of horror came from the men.

Ria the [Ladykiller].

In Jaeburg, that was the moment that gave Ria her nickname.

*

Footnotes:

The Garian Sword(Ivy Sword) from a certain Soul Calibur character...
This is censored in the raw.

Chapter 37: Thunder's Fangs

After they finished registering at the guild, they split up to purchase necessary supplies.

Since it was a dangerous town, the women and children weren't alone. Saying that, Ria went alone though.

If trouble turned up, it couldn't be helped. Since it wasn't even a crime if you killed your opponent in a duel, she truly thought it was a good town.

As expected, the first thing she set her eyes towards was the weapons shop.

Due to people challenging the impregnable demonic area known as the Dark Labyrinth, it was filled with many high quality weapons and armor.

Still, there were unfortunately little sharp katanas. Though there were a lot of goods, someone who could create things with magic like Ria could likely surpass them.

Though other than that, there were magic weapons sold as well.

Swords, spears, axes, and other things like hammers. There were even some rare and eccentric weapons too. When she asked the shopkeeper about them, it appeared that they were brought from a dwarven village.

She asked if there were any dwarf smiths that made katanas, but he unfortunately didn't know.

She bought a dagger for Maal to use in the shop. Other than that, she also bought a magic shield.

While doing that, she also sold swords and spears she'd made as practice. The iron-tipped spears sold for a lot. The swords' evaluations weren't so high and were offered appropriate prices.

Ria headed back to the guild after exiting the shop.

As she tossed meat skewers to Rudolph, who was laying down in the stable, there was a presence standing behind her.

"Are you good for a moment?"

Though it was a giant figure that one couldn't just hide, he moved surprisingly quietly.

Ria took Vargas' invitation.

Saying that he planned to return to the inn in the evening, Vargas invited Ria to the tavern.

"I don't drink alcohol. My favorite beverage is milk."

"Come to think of it, how old are you?"

"I turned fourteen the other day."

As expected, Vargas knit his eyebrows. Her strength didn't make sense with her age.

"By some chance, are you a reincarnated person?"

He saw through her well. In contrast, Ria didn't respond, asking for milk at the counter. Fortunately, the shop served goat's milk.

Vargas asked for beer. Lukewarm beer was poured into a large wooden tankard for him.

"Both you and that small mage comrade of yours. No matter how I see it... you're a bit too strong."

Not just Ria, he'd seen through Serge as well. She wondered if he used Identify, but even just by sensing magical power it wouldn't be too hard.

Since Serge's magical power leaked out, she had been concerned of that since before. If Lulu didn't teach him a way to control it, they might encounter unnecessary trouble sooner or later.

"Well, if you don't want to talk, that's fine. I had a few other things to ask anyway."

Vargas scratched his head. He was the one who invited her, but he hadn't put together all his questions.

"Right. First, why did you come to this town?"

"I would say to be an explorer, but I don't think that's all you were asking."

“That’s probably right. Power, money, honor. There are many different reasons for that.”

Since her reason to be an explorer was to traverse the labyrinth, she hadn’t thought much about it. Rather, it was more like she hadn’t thought about it at all.

“What about you? From the looks of it, you seem strong enough yourself.”

With power, wealth and fame would follow. That’s was Ria believed.

“Me? Well, to live. My wife and I have two younger children than Shizuna.”

Without holding anything back, Vargas spoke his mind. It was an extremely ordinary reason.

“In truth, I wanted Shizuna to marry someone like normal. Not become something like an explorer. She’s almost eighteen now.”

In this world, marriage was done early. The marriageable age for most people was around up till twenty years old.

“She swings her sword all year round, no man’s figure to be seen.”

Since it turned into something like grumbling, Ria decided to change the subject.

“I have one reason to enter the labyrinth. Knowledge. I want to ask the Dark Dragon Valis something.”

Vargas wasn’t surprised. He also didn’t laugh.

However, he nodded with a serious face.

“With a noble Ojou-san coming this far, I was sure it was something important.”

“No, it’s more of a privately important thing...”

She didn’t correct him on the thing about being nobility. Even if she said she was actually royalty, the man’s attitude wouldn’t have changed.

In her previous life, she would have chose a man like this to be friends

with.

From then on, the two just drank and only spoke a little.

She also decided to secretly return Shizuna's sword to Vargas.

She said it was because they might need it if they were attacked by demons while travelling.

However, she didn't speak about clearing Labyrinth City's. Since rumors had quick feet, Ria's identity would probably become apparently sooner or later. She didn't want to give out the information and encourage it.

The number one thing was that the country's princess being homosexual would be quite the scandal.

Then, when it came time for Ria to soon return, Vargas spoke softly.

"Would you all join up with my party?"

While Ria ate dinner after returning to the inn, she talked about Vargas' offer.

"An advantage for us is that we would be guided through the labyrinth we aren't used to. Frankly, we could die from seeing enemy attacks that have abnormal conditions for the first time."

Unlike the labyrinth in Labyrinth City, you could truly die in the Dark Labyrinth. And it was said there were many unique enemies like the Dogazer and Spectral Knight.

"I am opposed to it. They could double cross us."

Carlos objected. certainly, it wouldn't be good if they were suddenly attacked from behind in the labyrinth.

"I also think it would be dangerous."

Gig also objected it.

"First of all, what would be the merits to them?"

Lulu presented a question. For that, Ria responded.

"For one, strengthening their fighting potential. They don't seem to

want to go to a deeper floor.”

On the more shallow floors, there wasn't a small amount number of equipment from fallen adventurers. But when going deep, you could obtain items from powerful people that had died from going too far.

“Another thing, I want to provoke that child called Shizuna.”

Shizuna, seventeen years old, was a member of Jaeburg's preeminent explorer parties, [Thunder's Fangs]. Her fighting strength was also high. Ria, who was a non-standard, hadn't had anyone suitable in her age group up till now.

Not only easily defeating her in the duel, had to suffer through not heading back to her table for a while. Her high-held nose had folded a bit.

Both younger than her and stronger than her. Around a person like that, she might want parental affection or something.

“But come on, that kid, wouldn't she really stab Nee-chan from behind?”

Serge spoke while grinning. If someone were to have a kiss snatched from them by the same sex in front of so many people, they'd probably hold a grudge.

“I also want to object... but... I'll defer for now.”

Lulu taking a neutral position was unexpected. It was because she knew about her.

When Ria was in the royal palace, just how popular was she amongst the same sex?

Particularly conquering strong willed court ladies and knights, she'd taken pride in her amazing success rate.

By the way, though Lulu was also a target at first, she had stopped making moves on her when Lulu said her contents didn't match her appearance.

“For me... though I want to go against it, frankly I want to search together with strong people.”

Maal spoke with confidence. Though she went to buy a map of the labyrinth that day, it appeared the results weren't good and she wasn't able to get one.

"I agree by the way. An enemy I've never fought is much more scary than being stabbed in the back."

Only Serge was in favor of it. With the results of his Identify, even if the two fought together, Vargas and Shizuna wouldn't be able to defeat the Ogre King.

"For the time being, how about we meet the group's members tomorrow and decide from there?"

Ria was aggressively in favor of it. Though it was true she liked the parent and child pair, she wanted to spend as little time needed to clear the labyrinth as possible. The Dark Dragon Valis wouldn't necessarily grant Ria's wish after all.

Moreover, they had fought against Cordova on the way. It was better for her to be able to tell her father as soon as possible.

Rather than just being concerned over their own safety, she needed to keep an eye on continent-wide movements. On the journey, Ria's point of view extended significantly.

The next day, the party of eight visited the inn.

There were four warriors for the vanguard, one scout, and three people in the rear guard, two of them being mages.

A group of fourteen people gathering was sultry in itself. Vargas quickly opened his mouth to speak.

"So, how about it?"

"I think it would be good to first decide on our terms for joining forces."

Towards Ria's answer, Vargas nodded.

"And at the same time, as for the girl there who's looking over here with eyes that looks like a murderer, I wonder if you consent?"

Towards Shizuna, who hadn't said anything so far, Ria called out.

Before she could say anything, Vargas reigned her in by raising his hand.

"If she doesn't agree, she can just leave the party."

Shizuna trembled at the calm voice that said such a cold thing. She understood that her father said that with seriousness.

Though Ria liked to tease people herself, since she disliked seeing other people be teased by others, she didn't say anything else.

"For magic stones and raw materials from demons, how about two for you all for each one for us?"

They got into talks of specifics.

"Oh, is it fine to not share equally?"

"For the time being, it's very likely we'll be holding you back. The same thing for when we find treasures in the dungeon, it's fine if we use that as the basis. Though if there is a thing where that won't work, I'd like you to hand it over as consideration."

"Though I think there'll be a lot of kinds of magic bags and magic swords..."

"That's unnecessary. If we need something, it'd be a good warhammer or staff I guess."

They didn't need normal weapons at all, they already had magic swords. Though magic bags are expensive, they are commonly sold. Apart from that they also had Serge's space-time magic.

"Nee-chan, I want resistance-type Skill Orbs though..."

Though Serge whispered humbly, it was up to the negotiations.

Skill Orbs were things that permanently granted people Skills. Though it was super difficult bestowal magic, it wouldn't work if the user didn't have the related attribute for it.

Though Ria was mostly resistant to abnormal conditions thanks to

Dragon's Bloodline herself, Poison Resistance was usually extremely valuable.

Besides, though it wouldn't grant it if you didn't have enough magical power, it was probably fine for Serge.

"Since we'll manage it somehow or another, be patient for now."

After returning to Casalia, they could most likely prepare general Orbs. Exercising the royal family's privileges, she would strengthen her comrades.

Though tuning the terms from then on was trivial, Ria generously conceded most as Vargas didn't ask for anything unreasonable.

"Well then, for now it'll be a month."

One month. That's how long the party of many people would stay united.

Vargas presented his hand and Ria grasped it.

His palm was hard and thick, but even so flexible, a palm like steel.

Chapter 38: The Road to the Labyrinth

The party 'Thunder's Fangs' consisted of eight people.

First was Vargas, the leader, and his daughter Shizuna. Vargas specialized in greatswords and Shizuna in longswords.

There there was Vil and Gates who used shields. With his stature, Vil used a huge shield and held a maul. Gates used a one-handed sword and an ordinary shield, the same style as Carlos.

The scout was Shar, a cat beastkin like Maal. However, his fur was white with black spots.

As for the three people in the rear, the first was Zoro, using a bow. It looked like he could also use a sword. He was also in charge of creating the map.

The mage, Jason, was skilled in support and recovery magic. Excluding Shizuna, everyone this far was all around forty years old. The party had been together for ten years.

The last person, Celfelminto, nicknamed Cell, was an elf spirit mage. Three hundred years old. Still young for an elf.

All of them other than Shizuna were men. She was flower of the group.

The afternoon meeting came to an end and the group went shopping once again.

After seeing the veteran party, Ria's group felt they were lacking preparation. Then, saying the shopkeepers were their acquaintances, they took out some prized articles.

In this area too, it could be said they couldn't compete.

Incidentally, Ria looked for a caravan heading to Anise, entrusting it with a letter to the royal palace.

Including everything from Ogre Village to Labyrinth City, even the quarrel they had against Cordova's army, it was a very long letter. In addition to the relevant facts, it became like that after she also added her

own opinions.

She put the letter into a package and sealed it with wax. She securely made it so they hadn't seen the contents.

Of course, it took a suitable amount of gold coins to entrust it with them. Moreover, they would receive an additional reward on delivery, writing a few lines separately for that.

Worried about taking too long and earnest to deal with Cordova, she wanted to send someone to the country.

With Ria's sense of values, even taking Casalia's national interests into consideration, she felt the Cordova problem would be bad if it wasn't dealt with immediately. Of course, Ria's intuition was very likely spot on.

Then, at noon the following day, the group left Jaeburg. Reaching the labyrinth's entrance half a day later, it looked like the plan was going to be heading in and defeating it after one they stopped for a night.

Actually, there were several parties in front and behind them on the same road. Nevertheless, they kept a distance from Ria's group.

"The area around here has strong flying type demons. I'll help when push comes to shove."

As for whether or not he'd actually help, that'd depend on the situation at the time.

According the Vargas' explanation, they would be attacked by a lot of demons.

There weren't any Goblin settlements nearby. The reason for that was entirely due to the becoming food for the demons.

It seemed they would frequently encounter Gryphons, Wyverns, and Salamanders around level 70.

When a Wyvern attacked, Thunder's Fangs fought it as an example. The two shield bearers prevented its attacks while Vargas and Shizuna gradually cut it down. The mages provided minimal aid, preserving their magical power.

Though it was simple, it really wasn't that dangerous of a fight.

"Show me your skill on that next one there."

Seeing another Wyvern heading towards them, Vargas spoke.

Vargas' reason was probably to see the group's roles and cooperation.

However, there was a single guy that couldn't read the atmosphere.

"Longinus."

With a single space-time magic, the Wyvern's torso was torn through.

"It's not easy to eat Wyvern meat since it's so tough~"

Serge muttered in a carefree manner. He was riding on Rudolph's back, and though he was the most comfortable among them, it couldn't be helped since he was a child.

"W-what was that magic just now..."

"I don't get it. It felt like a mixture of fire and wind magic, but it also could've been physics magic..."

Despite the murmurs of astonishment, Ria took the magic stones out of the crashed Wyvern with a hatchet. It was pretty big, one step short of a magic crystal's purity.

Regarding Jason's view of preserving as much magical power as you can, in addition to Serge's Magical Power Cost Reduction Skill, he took it back since he remembered the Magical Power Recovery Speed Increase Skill.

Day after day, although he used his magical power to the limit, he kept doing it. His Natural Talent in Magic Gift was probably playing a big role.

The group resumed walking. They still had to pass the halfway point.

At sunset, they finally neared the summit of the mountain they aimed for.

When descending deep underground into the mountain, it's said that one would arrive at the Dark Dragon's abode.

“F-finally, we’re here...”

Lulu was dead tired from the unfamiliar mountain road. Though she occasionally changed with Serge on Rudolph’s back, it seemed the swaying motions made her feel sick.

A donkey’s back is for these kinds of things, but that was impossible. There was no place to safely keep a donkey.

They entered the gaping and gloomy entrance. There they came to a vast room where a group was already camping.

“We’re not camping outside?”

Though they had occasionally camped in the labyrinth, Ria asked curiously since she knew demons would appear. Vargas’ answer was simple.

“It would be unfortunate if a surprise attack from above happened. Being in here is safer.”

Right. So it was a matter of which was more dangerous.

“Well, how about taking a bath?”

When Ria said that, the members of Thunder’s Fangs had looks on their faces as if to say, “What’s this person saying?”

“A bath. Bath. We’re sweaty from walking along the mountain road. How ’bout an open air one since it’s a special occasion? Serge, please take out the tools.”

Next to the cave’s entrance, Ria built a bath. Earth magic, water magic, fire magic. With her technique it wasn’t an exaggeration to call it bath magic at this point. Though that wasn’t an actual magic, it was an advanced magic.

Since there were people looking, she set up a proper wall. It was perfect.

“You know, if you have magical power to make something like this, you should properly preserve it...”

Jason repeated his ‘common sense’ thing again.

“If you rest after cleaning yourself in a bath, you’ll recover your endurance and magical power faster. Don’t you know that endurance isn’t completely recovered from just camping?”

That was a fact. However, no one had verified something like that up to now. Therefore, considering the amount of time to prepare and make it, it was common to not go out of the way to build a bath.

Then again, Ria was anything but common.

“Since I made it a bit bigger, all women go in at once.”

“I’m fine. We could be attacked while bathing.”

Though Shizuna said something fairly commonplace, Ria was proof against commonplace.

“At a time like that wouldn’t it be fine to just fight in the nude?”

“Don’t say something unreasonable!”

Though it was unreasonable, it wasn’t impossible.

Because there were so many people, even without the women, it could be managed somehow or another.

“What about you? Vargas.”

Shizuna didn’t have the right to make decisions. Knowing that, Ria asked him.

Vargas slowly shook his head at his daughter’s desperate gaze.

“You should give it a try.”

“Alright! It’s decided, let’s go in together!”

Grabbing onto the waist of Shizuna, whose face was dyed in despair, Ria disappeared onto the other side of the wall. Maal quickly followed with toiletries and changes of clothes.

After examining the surrounding eyes, Lulu slowly entered as well. She judged that there was very little danger of being toyed with by today’s Ria. She calculated that.

Meanwhile, Shizuna was miserable.

“Stop! I said stop! Where are you touching!”

“You don’t like it? You don’t like it?”

“Gya—! Stoo—! Daaad!”

“Maal, strip her starting with her socks. It’s the aesthetics of it.”

“Understood and agreed.”

“By the way, it’s erotic so leave her with just socks. I remembered.”

“Kay.”

“Gya—!”

The sound of the hot water splashing could be heard.

“S-since I get it... I’ll do it myself, so...”

Giving up everything before long, Shizuna’s voice could be heard.

However, Ria didn’t spare her.

“Don’t hold back. I’ll wash you.”

“Gya—! Hold up! Seriously stop it! I apologized—!”

She probably didn’t understand what she was saying at all by this point.

“Wha—! Where are you touching—!”

“Eh? Your abs.”

The men outside shuddered at Ria’s obviously amused voice.

Just Serge was about to die from the moe.

“Gya—! Why are you touching a place like that!?”

“Nn~? You might get sullied here.”

As one would expect, Vargas became worried at that.

Shizuna, who appeared from the other side of the wall, crumbled down on the spot while crestfallen.

“Uuu... I got polished...”

To the last, Ria's hands were gentle. She had no intention of damaging a girl's body.

However, it left a deep wound on her heart. It left a scar.

"Ah~, the hot water was so good."

Towels covering to their necks, Ria and Maal appeared. Lulu also came out after a slight delay.

Ria's expression was refreshed, as though she somehow accomplished something.

"Well then next is the men's turn to head in. I just warmed the water back up."

Vargas and the others looked at each other. Then, looking towards Carlos and Gig, they confirmed something.

"Umm... you guys, are you interested in that stuff like her?"

"No!"

Carlos and Gig's voices were in sync.

"Please pardon me from homos."

Serge said that unpleasantly.

Chapter 39: The First Exploration

Shizuna woke up from the sound of a sword being swung.

It wasn't really a sword, it was a katana.

It was still dark in the cave. Almost no light came in from the entrance, she could only see the figure from a faint light produced by magic.

At the center of the light, Ria was swinging her katana.

Though she had learned her father's style of swordplay, she understood the principle.

Each form had its own principle. The sword slash was tinged with light from its initial motion, the end of its motion was beautiful.

The blade was glittering.

The same went for Ria, who was handling the katana. Her beauty was beyond comparison.

(Even though she's a pervert...)

Her personality and skill didn't match.

Though she felt Shizuna's gaze, Ria swung her katana with a peaceful heart.

To be bloodthirsty and to sexually harass many girls, she was pure when she was with her katana.

Better yet, because she purified her corrupted heart when she was with her katana, she was able to live in rivers of blood.

Finishing her forms, she quietly sheathed the katana.

Turning around, she met Shizuna's eyes.

Though Shizuna looked away with an amazing momentum, Ria's current mind and body were filled with purity.

"It's still early in the morning. Want to have a quick match?"

Not knowing why, Shizuna found herself obediently nodding towards

Ria's question.

Their bout was held outside the cave.

Shizuna was most skilled in piercing long sword techniques.

Now that she didn't use a magic sword, her basic skills were being improved. Even without killing intent, she put her whole spirit into it and let out her techniques.

Even with all of that, though, she couldn't surpass Ria.

"Well, since you've fought against demons the whole time, it's no wonder you couldn't win."

Ria admonished her. She had placed the point of her katana against Shizuna's neck many times by then.

"If you're just speaking about talent in the sword, you might even be better than me. Still, you haven't practiced one on one combat and your experience is a problem."

Her words didn't help to recover Shizuna's pride. Though it is true that Shizuna mainly fought against demons, she had fought unarmed against men in that town filled with fights.

"Have you ever been trained in war?"

To that question, Shizuna shook her head. An explorer's swordplay was to fight against demons.

However, the knights that trained Ria polished her capability in the theory behind human wars. Moreover, she had mastered that art in her previous life.

Though you couldn't express ability with a simple Skill, it was Ria after all.

"Use the rest of your endurance. One last time, give me your best shot."

Ria opened her hands to usher her in. Meanwhile, Shizuna brandished her sword grandly and charged.

But then, she wasn't able to swing it down.

Before she had noticed, Ria who was a good distance from her had drawn close enough for their noses to touch. When she flicked Shizuna's sword away bare-handed, "W-why..."

"The secrets of the nonexistent katana. By fighting unarmed, neither the opponent nor yourself will die. It's the best technique to use if you don't want to kill someone. Well, I'd disagree if you asked me."

Ria didn't use body strengthening magic. Shizuna had been completely overwhelmed by skill.

"For now, how about some food?"

Contrasting Shizuna's ragged breathing, Ria hadn't even broken a sweat.

"No way, for Shizuna to be unable to do anything..."

Gates, who had been watching from the cave's shadow, sighed. Among those in Thunder's Fangs, he was the most knowledgeable in person to person combat.

"Vargas, could you win?"

He asked Vargas, but he was already shaking his head slowly.

"Though I can't know for certain without trying, I believe it's impossible."

Vargas continued.

"For the millennium, it's said that heroes who exceed the limits of ordinary people will appear. Perhaps, that Ojou-chan might be one of them."

Vargas was confident in his skill. As an explorer that challenges the Dark Labyrinth, he also had fighting spirit.

However, the fact was that he'd come to a standstill after capturing a floor.

He was still alive. However, he wanted to feel even more alive.

Getting to his age, he was finally able to find it.

The group finished breakfast and immediately began their exploration.

Since they had already thoroughly explored the first floor, they headed towards the stairs leading to the second floor.

Going ahead of them was Shar and Maal, the cat beastkin combo.

In the Dark Labyrinth, there were few mechanical traps. You could say there were hardly any at all. However, magical traps were abundant. Maal's Fairy Eyes were very useful for finding them.

The labyrinth's traps weren't constant. Particularly the magical ones. The ones found most often in the Dark Labyrinth were those that materialized a great amount of demons when stepping on the magic formation.

"How many is a 'great amount' anyway? Depending on the amount, it might be a good way to raise levels."

Vargas responded to Ria's absurd statement calmly.

"It's usually between ten and twenty. Since there are a lot of enemies that can use magic, there's a high chance of people dying."

This was different than the Immortal Labyrinth, Ria warned herself. It would have been different if she were going by herself, but she couldn't afford to bring her comrades to their death.

Salamanders and Worms, as well as huge insect-type monsters were defeated. They had obtained a huge amount of magic crystals. There was definitely no comparison between the Immortal Labyrinth's enemies and this one's.

Before long, the two people that went ahead returned.

"There's the sound of metallic armor. It would be good if that was just the normal sound of armor, but..."

According to Shar's explanation, it would be bad if the enemy was a Ghost Knight-type.

"A detour huh."

Vargas' judgement wasn't wrong. Being able to evade danger was a necessary talent for an explorer.

An attack from a Ghost Knight inflicts an abnormal condition, it was very dangerous while exploring labyrinths. It's fine if it can be fixed, but the speed you can escape from the labyrinth with falls if you can't.

In that sense, Ria probably didn't have any talent at being an explorer.

"Hey, is it no good for me to go by myself?"

Vargas frowned when she said that. Though he looked to Carlos for his opinion, he only shrugged.

"The Ghost Knight's attack will cause a different abnormality according to the individual. Though you've probably fought one, it's dangerous."

However, he didn't forbid it.

"If you're fine with it, then I'm off for a moment."

Ria broke into a run as if she was just heading out for a bit.

Shuzina was dumbfounded and went up to Carlos.

"Hey! Aren't you that girl's guard!?"

She wasn't worried. She wasn't worried, definitely. But still.

Just, she just didn't want to approve of that lack of common sense.

"I'm not Ojou's guard, I'm a watchdog. Well, I can't say I've accomplished that recently though..."

Carlos already thought that worrying about Ria was useless. She was just unaware of danger.

The members of Thunder's Fangs were worried.

The sound of metal hitting metal could be heard from the other side of the bend in the passage.

Before long, it grew quiet. Ria popped back out into view.

"I defeated it. Though, it wasn't a Ghost Knight, it was an Evil Spirit Knight."

Despite being dumbfounded, the group ran over to Ria.

The armor had decayed. Just the sword remained.

“An Evil Spirit Knight...? That’s a higher-ranked version of the Ghost Knight.”

Vargas firmly recalled how troublesome those were.

While the Ghost Knight was just an undead that had regrets left in the world, Evil Spirit Knights were demons who cursed all living humans. Specifically, they had many ways to inflict abnormal conditions.

“It’s good you were able to defeat it by yourself. Do you have a talisman or something?”

Jason asked with a piercing interest. Though explorer comrades wouldn’t pry into each other’s skills too much, this much wasn’t to be concerned about.

“I don’t really have something like that, but most abnormal conditions don’t work on me. Before you say anything, since I’m a bit weak to frenzy-type conditions, don’t get near me at that time.”

In fact, there was one more thing. Though it was a fatal weakness, she didn’t mention it since it was unrelated to labyrinth exploration.

To not be affected by abnormal condition attacks was a terrific and envious characteristic for an explorer.

“I see, so you can defeat high leveled enemies with that then?”

Jason consented and thought to himself.

During their conversation, Serge used Identify on the sword that remained.

“Though it’s not cursed, it curses the opponent. The curse causes what it cuts to not move, making it heavy like stone. When the opponent is a man, the effect doubles.”

It was a long sword. Among them, Shizuna wasn’t the only one to use long swords, but...

“We don’t need it. It’s fine if you guys take it.”

“Is it alright? Even if you don’t use it, it’s worth a fortune.”

Though the girl watched the sword with eyes that looked like they were drooling, Vargas asked to make sure.

Explorers hoped for riches. They hoped for power. This sword was both.

“I don’t mind. However, this is still the first floor. There’s still a lot of fun to be had.”

“No, it’s unusual for something like an Evil Spirit Knight to be on this floor...”

Vargas passed Shizuna, who already couldn’t help but be amazed, the sword.

“I can use it?”

She asked her father with sparkling eyes to make sure.

“You having it would improve our fighting strength the most.”

Though they were in a passage, the group took a rest.

Shizuna swung her sword, becoming familiar with it in her hands. Fortunately, she didn’t seem to have trouble handling it.

“Seriously, even though she was born a woman, she just likes weapons...”

“Ria’s the same. Though she doesn’t hate to dress up beautifully...”

Vargas and Lulu shared similar sighs.

“Have you known the Ojou-chan long?”

“Yes, oh my. I met her around four years ago already now?”

“Half-elves have a long life. I thought you surely knew her since her birth?”

“No no. I’m still only around twenty-five years old.”

Though half-elves didn’t live as long as elves, they did inherit the characteristic of not growing old.

While having such a conversation, they were deepening their friendship. Seeing that, Carlos was envious. As usual.

The labyrinth conquering was proceeding well.

Ria, together with the two scouts, went quite far ahead.

If they discovered an enemy that the scouts couldn't identify themselves, Ria could use Identify and they would be able to figure out if they should engage.

Even if it was an enemy they usually avoided, since Ria could block abnormal conditions, they took up the strategy of the other members beating up the remnants.

Specifically, the Basilisk.

Ria easily conquered the formidable enemy that possessed the gaze of petrification.

She crushed its eyes with her katana, then called the rest of the group up. Just like beating an octopus, it was easy work.

It could nullify magic, and though they fought an existence that could do that like the Dogazer before, they broke through it with strength.

Coming this far, the members of Thunder's Fangs were already becoming accustomed to the abnormality known as Ria. Though they had doubted Ria's strategy of rushing forward, they didn't hesitate anymore.

At a speed that put them far ahead of schedule, they reached their goal, the sixteenth floor. It took them four days to reach there.

Though the Thunder's Fang's map was complete up to the sixteenth floor, it was full of empty spots there.

They had decided to cooperate up to here to get them accustomed to the labyrinth and turn back here. Although, they had planned on it taking around a week for them to get there.

When they then made it on the fourth day, Ria's patience had hit its limit.

“Let’s take a bath.”

With those words, Shizuna paled.

Since something like that just wasn’t said in a place like that, she didn’t think she’d be made to enter a bath in the labyrinth.

“Ah, that sounds good.”

Lulu also agreed. She thought the smell of sweat couldn’t be helped, but if Ria insisted, she wouldn’t oppose.

Lulu tapped Shizuna’s shoulder and whispered.

“Give up. If you hesitate, that will just amuse Ria more.”

No one stopped Ria anymore. Bathing in the labyrinth was also an abnormality, it was something newcomers might try.

Reluctantly, Shizuna took off her clothes herself and entered the bath area.

Ria didn’t proactively sexually harass her and quietly washed her back. It was rather eerie.

“You have beautiful skin after all.”

“I-is that right? There are scars everywhere though.”

“Though those are also cute, why not heal them if you mind them?”

Ria, who had smooth skin without any wounds, spoke.

Though explorers were rough people, Shizuna was also a woman. If something like that were possible, she would ask even if it took some of the money she’d saved.

In truth, it was possible through a special healing magic.

After that, Ria began to massage the soles of Shizuna’s feet.

“Eh-, a-a place like that—”

“Does it feel good? By stimulating this place, it recovers your fatigue and improves any abnormalities in your internal organs.”

By the way, Maal massaged Ria’s soles. Of course, Ria also massaged

Maal's soles.

It was a paw pad massage.

With a loosened and relaxed expression, Shizuna stepped out of the bath.

Knowing this pleasure might be dangerous. Though she felt a sense of crisis, it was difficult to deny something so good for the body.

The men entered the bath next, and she fell asleep for the day.

It was the third day on the way back.

Though there was still some dangerous fights, they always had some flexibility to spare. Limited combat like this shouldn't have been done in this labyrinth. It was different from the Immortal Labyrinth.

"But it was the right answer to get more people."

Leaving the cave at last, they bathed in the sunlight.

"The speed and level of fatigue is definitely different. Though, most of that is thanks to Ojou-san."

"I'm just happy to have fought formidable enemies."

Ria answered that her aim was power, not treasure.

Cell's beautiful elf form was no exception, expressing a somewhat ironic smile.

"Though not a warrior, my Corfus tribe's senior is the preeminent strength on the continent. Try and meet him at some point."

Cell wasn't from a forest nearby, but rather from the Oomori Woods.

They returned to Jaeburg on the mountain road.

That way was also dangerous, but with those members it'll be alright.

The party collected around the gigantic gravity well known as Ria.

However, no one was aware.

Millennium.

The Five God Dragons.

The Demon King and the demons.

There wasn't much time until the stability they had intentionally made crumbled.

Chapter 40: The Fomenting

The sunlight was bright.

In a port city on the southern edge of the Dragon Bone Continent, there were lots of goods and people moving about.

On a pier of the port, there was a youth gazing at the flow of people in envy.

He wore short sleeved clothing and thin-fabric trousers. Even so, around here, that was dressing warmly.

Just a sword hung at his waist, and although he gave a slight martial impression, he was a man that gave a generally calm feeling.

Someone approached him.

Dressed in a hooded mantle, the person completely attracted everyone's attention. From the thin figure he could easily make out, he thought it was probably a woman.

"I've arrived."

Her voice as well, it was definitely a young woman.

"Yeah, good work. Going so far must have been unfortunate. From here on is the most interesting part of our task..."

"No, responding to His Majesty's summons is a matter of course for this retainer. Rather, having His Majesty trouble his own hands, we realize the shortage of our ability—"

"No, no, it couldn't be helped."

The youth waved his hand dismissively.

"There's no choice but for a person who can do it to do it. If that is true, I want you to be in the country too."

"Your kind words are more than this one deserves..."

The youth smiled wryly. Even though he was accustomed to it, their behavior had become exaggerated after being separated for a short while.

These beloved retainers.

“And so, since you’ve come, I want to investigate a few relevant things.”

Just a little, the youth’s atmosphere became serious.

“Here I go. There appears to be a human who defeated the Ogre King.”

“The Ogre King—!? No way, the hero?”

“No, no, he should still be in the imperial capital, it’s a different human. Moreover, although I say he was defeated, it’s not that he was killed. For that reason, he wasn’t caught in my magic.”

If it were the hero, there was a high possibility of the Ogre King being killed due to stereotypes.

Moreover, the magic applied to the Ogre King was one to let them know if he died. If they didn’t periodically check, they probably wouldn’t have known even now.

“After that, the party left and conquered Labyrinth’s labyrinth.”

That fact alone was enough to shake the woman.

Conquering the labyrinth, even for the Ogre King alone that was unreasonable. Moreover, time is time.

The millennium is near, this time.

“The location is closer. Is it the same person?”

“I don’t know the details well. However, since it’s spread to this town, it’s a story of a month ago already.”

Labyrinth City was one of the nonaggression areas for the youth. For that reason, he had no choice but to rely on hearsay.

“Having been conquered, Labyrinth’s power is sure to have fallen as well. If you go now, you should be able to conquer it as well. Then when you meet Labyrinth, I want you to hear the full story. If you can receive even a little power from her and she is able to, it should be easier to progress from here on.”

Though reincarnators were capricious, he didn’t believe they would

obediently give away their power.

“Then what about the person who defeated the Ogre King and those that conquered the labyrinth?”

The youth shook his head at the question.

“Do not contact them. However, do ask what kind of human it is. Use someone, be beyond careful, make sure they don’t find out our identities.”

“Should we deal with them now, before they are unmanageable?”

The youth smiled wryly with the vassal’s dangerous tone.

“First, the question is whether or not we could deal with them. They are someone at least stronger than the Ogre King. It would be too dangerous to fight them head on. Moreover, the person did not kill someone of the Ogre race... well, it might not be a person, but maybe we could win them over.”

If they’re not a person, they might be a demi-human. That possibility was taken into account.

However, he didn’t consider it being a woman.

“To be our comrade?”

“Is that strange?”

The woman didn’t think it was normal. She didn’t say it though.

What she said was quite the opposite.

“Certainly, that possibility exists.”

Saying that, it appeared that she agreed. At any rate, she held the words of her lord with respect.

“Then, Your Majesty, I will immediately head to Shashmeer.”

“Yep, I’ll entrust it to you. Even so—”

The youth poked the woman’s forehead.

“It’s not ‘Your Majesty’ out of the royal palace, haven’t I told you to call me by my name?”

“S-sorry, Ars-sama!”

The moment she vigorously bowed her head, the sea breeze blew and exposed her face.

Silver hair. Dark brown skin. Long ears extended from her head.

A dark elf. Amongst demons, it was the race most proficient in magic.

Since Ars quickly fixed the hood, none of the humans noticed.

“Be careful. Also make sure to properly use transformation magic. You’re a scatterbrain sometimes aren’t you?”

Though she was treated like a child, she wasn’t displeased.

Living for hundreds of years, she couldn’t match up to her lord that knew her from childhood.

“T-then I’m off.”

Her form disappeared. Then, she rode the winds toward the distant northwest part of the continent.

Seeing her off, the youth sighed slightly dejectedly and headed toward land from the pier.

His work in this country had completed its first stage. Since he moved quietly from the shadows, he wasn’t found by dangerous adversaries.

However, the following task would be different. Not only adversaries, but all strong people on the continent would find out.

Still, it was necessary to carry out. The millennium. In order to avoid tragedy at its conclusion.

In the busy port city, he quietly entered a back street. Careful to not be seen, he used magic to teleport.

Space-time magic.

If Serge saw him, he would probably been astonished at the precision of its composition.

Fearing the eyes of his enemies, the youth faced his destination. This

continent's core, the imperial capital.

Knowing his purpose, he was still by himself.

In front of her eyes, there was a mass of muscle.

Over many years, that muscle had been constantly strengthened.

She felt it was even beautiful.

Facing that muscle, Ria—pierced it with a needle.

“Uoh.”

The voice Vargas unintentionally leaked out wasn't an unpleasant one.

Ria pierced needles along the line of Vargas' backbone. These needles were also produced from genesis magic.

The needles' heads were beaded to stimulate.

“U~mu.”

Sound continued to leak from Vargas' mouth.

“D-do you really not feel any pain?”

Shizuna inquired while watching fearfully. Similarly, the other members who were watching questioned with their looks.

“Muuu, it doesn't hurt. Rather... the pressure feels good.”

It was the third day after finishing their first exploration.

After Dark Labyrinth exploration was considering recuperation from fatigue, equipment repairs, about ten days of rest from start to finish. That was Thunder's Fangs pattern.

However, Ria objected.

“Generally speaking, three days is enough for recuperation.”

When she said to recover with magic, the members of Thunder's Fangs had already considered that.

Certainly, magic could recover fatigue. It could also recover wounds and the like.

But if you did that repeatedly in a short time, the amount of fatigue recovered and the recovery speed of the wounds would decrease.

This was a natural phenomenon for explorers. Carlos, who had been on marches on the battlefield, also knew this.

Ria didn't know. She strove to exterminate all demons in the vicinity in one day. It was because she could disregard damage in Labyrinth City to some degree. Above all, her fatigue recovered quickly and due to her constitution her wounds would as well.

However, she felt that a rest period of ten days was really long. For this, Shizuna held the same opinion.

Accordingly, Ria decided to try out acupuncture from her previous life.

Ria hadn't given acupuncture treatment in her previous life of course. Neither did she have a license for it. [1]

However, having received it herself, she was very grateful for it. In any case, a martial artist wasn't someone that could be separated from injuries.

Sprains that should have taken two months to recover with scientific treatment would be cured with just a few days.

Acupuncturists with magical arms, qigong therapists, seitai masters. She had visited them many times in her previous life. [2] [3]

And although it hadn't gone to using needles, she had been taught how to stimulate vital points to promote recovery to some degree.

As for her acupuncture treatment, she just used her experience and intuition.

Of course, at first, no one wanted to receive a treatment they'd never heard of before.

In front of everyone, Ria calmly pierced thin needles into her own hands and feet.

... she pierced a pain point at one point by mistake, but she endured it expressionlessly.

Then Vargas became interested in it and stepped up as a guinea pig.

And with that, she pierced him with needles on his back, where there were few pain points.

(Unexpectedly, didn't this become magical power manipulation training?) Like dragons had the pulse of the world, humans had blood vessels.

In this world, magical power flowed.

By taking a specific posture and meditating, she was able to hasten her magical power recovery. She could even do this at Casalia.

Dozens of needles spanned from the waist of his back, to his shoulders, to his neck.

"I'm surprised. My body really feels light."

Since Vargas said that while waving his arms, the warriors also asked Ria for acupuncture.

Ria willingly treated them while making disposable needles.

Finishing all of the men, Ria thought next would be the women for her to enjoy.

Ria's knees fell out from under her.

"Eh?"

Her body trembled. From the tips of her toes to her hair, her entire body.

"W-what's happening?"

She wasn't afraid. Nor was she trembling with excitement.

Maal and Lulu drew close to Ria from both sides while panicking. However, after a moment Maal and Cell felt an abnormality.

"The spirits are clamoring..."

Spirits dwelled in all things. They were making noise as if the world was trembling.

The wizards also noticed it before long. In a faraway place, some extravagant magic was being used.

“Anise... no, it’s a little different... farther?”

Lulu muttered. Why could she feel magic from so far away? Just how much magical power was used?

But what Ria felt wasn’t something like that.

Something was lost.

A puzzle piece necessary for this world... fell away.

She didn’t know just what was lost. However, something was lost. Something that should never have been lost.

With that gigantic feeling of loss, Ria could do nothing but tremble.

*

Footnotes:

1. Acupuncture - A form of alternative medicine and a key component of traditional Chinese medicine involving thin needles inserted into the body at acupuncture points. [Return](#)
2. Seitai - Technically, it consists in easing the activity of the life force by re-adjusting the physiology of the body. [Return](#)
3. Qigong - A holistic system of coordinated body posture and movement, breathing, and meditation used for health, spirituality, and martial arts training. [Return](#)

Chapter 41: The Prelude of Collapse

The group slowly went down the mountain road.

That wasn't unusual. For the city's residents, it was a familiar sight.

Explorers returned alive from the labyrinth. It was a daily routine.

Even if veteran parties searched through a different area, they would usually be able to handle the exploration.

"W-we're here~"

Quickly passing through the gate, Lulu, who was using a walking stick, collapsed.

She didn't think about annoying passersby. She didn't have the composure to.

Like caught fish, the other members also sat down, leaning against the wall of the building along the roadside.

"Seriously, I thought that we were going to die this time."

Though Ria was the only person with a nonchalant attitude, her equipment was ragged.

She didn't have any armor, just clothes. Holes were scattered here and there, tempting sights to the men.

They were spare clothes. These were the last ones.

Even though she could use genesis magic, her magical power was precious and the other members were exhausted.

She was saving her magical power for an emergency, so she turned out like this in the end.

Indeed, it was a miracle no one died.

Serge was laying on Rudolph's back, asleep as though he were dead.

All of the warrior's armor had deformed from acid and extreme heat. The mages used their magical power to their limits, exhausting it until they started burning their life force.

More than a month had already passed since the formation of the new Thunder's Fangs.

The first agreed upon trial period had passed and their roles were firmly set. Everyone concluded it was fine to continue as they had been doing.

Then, from measuring just how much fighting strength they had, this was the result of just a little unreasonableness.

Until now, Thunder's Fangs had went up to the thirty-sixth floor. The final floor they reached this time was the forty-ninth.

The King Hydra, that was an extreme demon Serge Identified.

There were also unreasonably amounts of Evil Spirit Knight groups.

The army of magical creatures were hell.

Things like the Flame Giants were nightmarish.

They defeated all of them. They didn't run. They couldn't run.

Defeating the King Hydra, they started to return, but were attacked en route.

"Thinking about it, the Dark Dragon might have been waiting in front of us."

Shouldering Lulu, Ria spoke to Vargas.

"With its strength, it certainly could have been the gatekeeper."

Leaning his back against the wall exhausted, Vargas responded.

The King Hydra was strong. It may have been on the Cyclops' level, or possibly even stronger.

If there was a stronger demon than that, it could only be something like a Dragon. Rather, could a Dragon be stronger than that?

"Has Cell fought against a Dragon?"

Ria asked while changing the shoulder she lent out. Since elves had long lives, she believed they would also have a lot of experiences.

"Only a Sub-Dragon. Not a genuine Dragon."

Ria had experienced slaughter if it was a Sub-Dragon. It was crushed though.

(Even so...)

Ria thought. The town's atmosphere was strange. One of the town's leading parties came back in tatters. Wouldn't people call out to greet them?

There was little traffic. Normally, squalid men would be roaming the streets, but there were very few people now.

Nevertheless, it was time to rest. No matter what happened, they couldn't fight in their current state. Apart from herself, it would take many days for the other humans to recover.

"Alright everyone~, get up~. Time to go home~"

Apart from endurance and magical power, she really wanted to go take a bath.

Everyone moving in a manner similar to a group of zombies, Ria and the rest of the group returned to the inn.

"Ueh?"

Someone let out a strange voice. There was an abnormally large amount of people inside the inn.

The dining room on the first floor was completely filled. It was still before evening. The many patrons were talking without eating for some reason.

Could they even be called patrons to begin with?

She wanted to ask what the heck happened.

Surely a Dragon didn't appear nearby of something? If so, she could agree.

Certainly, if that was how it was she would understand.

While reading to the hotel's counter, Ria didn't think that her prediction would prove right.

Her prediction was off the mark.

Off in a bad direction.

When she hesitatingly asked about it at the counter, the receptionist girl answered.

“It seems the Imperial Capital disappeared.”

“Eh? Huh?”

Ria unintentionally let out a strange voice.

She didn’t understand what she meant.

If you spoke about the Imperial Capital, it was the Imperial Capital. The capital of the empire.

There was only one empire on the Dragon Bone Continent. The nation founded by the Saint Emperor Ryuke Shifaka, the empire in the center of the continent.

The empire had no name. Nameless, it was the only empire like that.

The population of the Imperial Capital was about three million people. The center of all main roads, of culture, of military affairs, and of magic.

Vanished.

She couldn’t understand.

Ria looked behind her. Her comrades were looking around uneasily. Around them, the other guests looked similarly uneasy.

They probably didn’t want to go outside. They wanted to gather where other people were.

She couldn’t understand.

“For now...”

Ria turned around.

“Take a bath, eat, sleep. But first is the bath!”

She announced toward her comrades with a triumphant look.

While she entered the bath, Ria thought.

The bath at this inn was meant for one person. Though she didn't want to not enter with Maal unless it were impossible, as expected, this time neither of them were lively enough to frolic around.

It's said that the Imperial Capital disappeared. It physically disappeared.

Physically. For example, something like a nuclear weapon.

Still, she thought it wasn't possible. Naturally, the Imperial Capital was given impregnable magical defenses. Using Casalia's royal castle's magical defenses as a reference, it probably wouldn't be affected even at the level of nuclear weapons.

It was attacked by a God Dragon. That was hard to believe. In the first place, under the ground near the Imperial Capital was the strongest Dragon named Dark Dragon Valis, along with the sleeping Golden Dragon.

Then did the Golden Dragon destroy the Imperial Capital from the inside?

Other than that, could the Imperial Capital have been annihilated like that?

To begin with, no one understood the extent of the God Dragons' powers. The Golden Dragon had a contract with the Saint Emperor, it should have been protecting the Imperial Capital. Because of that, the Imperial Capital was able to avoid being overrun even during millenniums and had become the base for humanity.

The Imperial Capital disappeared.

Where did the Golden Dragon go?

For this millennium, the Imperial Capital disappeared?

There wasn't enough information. Not enough by far.

Even if everyone was resting, she herself had recovered her endurance and magical power. She wanted to gather information.

Even if it was said to have disappeared, there were three million people living there. Some among those must have been a mage of Rufus' caliber. The royal family should have been protected by unbelievable talismans. There must be survivors.

Where to start? She hadn't asked who brought the information.

When Ria left the bathtub, she dried herself off quickly.

She produced clothes using genesis magic and quickly changed into them before leaving the bathroom.

As for Maal and Lulu, they had already collapsed on their beds and were fast asleep. They probably fell asleep before bathing.

Affixing only Nagasone Kotetsu at her waist this time, Ria left the room.

She went down the stairs and went to the table where a man who had become an acquaintance sat.

While drinking milk she requested, she heard his story. However, Ria didn't get any of the information she was hoping for.

Still, she now knew that a caravan arrived from the Casalia area three days before bringing the news.

Obtaining news from Anise in Casalia that the Imperial Capital disappeared, the caravan came here.

Afterwards, caravans similarly came bearing the news. They didn't have any detailed information, but it was a fact that the Imperial Capital had vanished.

So it was the truth.

If Anise was the source of the information, there was probably no mistaking the origin of the information. There was a means of communication by magic between the Royal Capital and the Imperial Capital.

There was no contact with the Imperial Capital. To confirm what happened, they dispatched Dragon Knights. With the speed of Dragons, a

round trip... no, with a mage recovering it, it would arrive after no later than three days. From there the report would be sent by way of magic.

Confirming the current situation with the Royal Palace, the information became common talk between merchants and didn't take much time to spread.

If you considered a merchant's network, excluding the details, the most important parts will spread instantly.

... It might be best to return to Anise to find out the details.

However, what could she do even if she returned?

Ria pondered.

She was thinking about what she could do.

Thinking while laying down on the bed, she fell asleep.

It was just before sunrise when she awoke.

That was much later than she usually got up. Though she wasn't tired, she was probably mentally fatigued.

With Nagasone Kotetsu in hand, she went out to the inn's garden. Easily unsheathing the katana, the blade shined by the light of daybreak.

She brandished the katana and held that stance, unmoving.

Unmoving.

Ever unmoving.

Her heart moved. Her blood moved. Her lungs moved.

The surrounding air moved.

Air that touched the katana was sliced through.

Even so, she remained unmoving.

She moved.

The blade of her katana stopped just before the ground in front of her.

"Alright!"

She cut away her hesitation.

Right now, she could do something here. It was something only she could do.

She would meet with Dark Dragon Valis. She would calm down after that.

In the morning sun, Ria began to carefully practice her forms.

Chapter 42: The Grand Strategy

Ria visited Vargas' house in the high-end residential area of Jaeburg in the afternoon.

She was told by his wife that he was still somehow or another waking up and eating.

Ria firmly refused the wife's invitation to come in, instead waiting in the foyer.

Meanwhile, Shizuna, who was asleep well into the afternoon, met her face to face. She was cute even when she was waking up. The person herself was quite frightened, though.

Her two younger brothers had come to see the Great Woman Hero that defeated their sister, but were surprised and charmed by her unexpected beauty.

The meal was finished before long and she took out the slightly troubled Vargas.

They chose a place where they could talk quietly. In this town, that could only be the park.

"Well?"

Sitting down on the bench, Vargas urged her to hurry.

"Surely you aren't going to say we're going back into the labyrinth so soon?"

Though it was improbable, Ria did things that were improbable. Vargas already understood that.

Of course, although Ria did unreasonable things, she wasn't unreasonable. That was his impression at least.

"What kind of person do you think I am?"

"The representative of unreasonableness, recklessness, and thoughtlessness."

Striking words. She deserved them though.

“Well, we’re not going back into the labyrinth. It’s fine to rest for a bit longer.”

Ria said so. It was an appeal called common sense.

“Since next time we’re going to be conquering the Dark Labyrinth.”

However, she spoiled it with her following words.

Vargas reluctantly nodded with an amazed faze.

“It’s not impossible. We can definitely make it there without anyone dying.”

“Of course. No-one will die.”

Comrades were important. To say nothing of Vargas, who had lost comrades many times in his youth, Ria also felt as though she has important people to protect.

“Is that what you wanted to talk about?”

“No, I wanted to ask your opinion on something.”

Ria hesitated, a little lost on how to start. It was probably best to start from the beginning.

“First, have you heard about the Imperial Capital’s disappearance?”

“Ah, it’s still a rumor. Though it’s a fairly credible one.”

“The fact that the Imperial Capital disappeared, for this Millennium, there’s a possibility that the human race may be ruined.”

Vargas’ body trembled faintly.

Jaeburg was close to demon tribe territory. If there would be an invasion at the start of the Millennium, it would probably be swallowed up quickly. [1]

With that, the human race would lose the majority of its population for this Millennium. In the battle three thousand years ago, apart from the southeastern island area and the Imperial Capital, you could say that

human civilization ceased to exist.

“My family should take shelter...”

Vargas muttered. The further south you went, the less danger there should be.

“It would be good going to Casalia. I’ve even written a letter of introduction. The Royal Capital has powerful defenses.”

Ria could do something to that extent.

“Then here it is. To prevent humanity’s extinction, we need the Dark Dragon’s power.”

“So conquer the labyrinth? Although Dark Dragon Valis is a friend to humanity, that doesn’t mean he would actively fight against the demon tribe.” [2]

He was bound as a friend to Militant Emperor Ryuke Riana two thousand years ago, and was Founder Leyte Anaia’s spouse one thousand years ago. He exercised tremendous power at the fringes.

“Then that settles it. I just have to be like my ancestors.”

Vargas caught her eyes and stared at her.

“I haven’t said it yet, but my real name is Ryuke Riana Crystal Casalia. Though I’m an illegitimate child, I am Casalia’s princess.”

“Ah, I knew.”

“... That so?”

She wasn’t surprised he knew. Not having said it up to now, he probably just feigned ignorance.

She had grandly introduced herself as a princess in Labyrinth City after all. With information spreading here, it was easy to tie that identity to Ria, considering her capabilities.

Ria was impressed. Vargas still gave her advice.

“Labyrinth City’s mayor said that the Millennium would happen within ten years.”

Even with that, the information wasn't obvious. Its range was too huge.

"Between ten years and a single year, it's a different thing entirely."

"Yeah, that's why I already don't think there's any time to waste."

They had lost the Imperial City, and perhaps even the Golden Dragon.

"Back up a little, were the spirits clamoring over that?"

"That's... I see, at that time, that was when the Imperial Capital disappeared."

All the way from the Imperial Capital to here, separated by thousands of kilometers, the mages detected vast amounts of magical power.

If that much magical power was used, it wouldn't be strange for even a God Dragon, this world's guardians, to disappear.

"I've been thinking about it. Without the Imperial Capital, how will we stop the demon tribe's invasion?" [3]

Ria used a stick to make a rough sketch of the continent on the ground.

"From the far east, the Giant Swamp, the Istria Kingdom, the Oomori Woods, Holy City, the Sacred Mountain Cyrus and Magic City, the Mountain Range of Death, Casalia, groups of small to medium cities, the Dark Labyrinth, and the Large Inland Sea."

Touching all of this was the layer of permafrost, the demon tribe's territory on the other side.

"The Giant Swamp will be no problem since the Water Dragon is there. Oomori woods has the great war potential of the elves. If Holy City and Magic City cooperates, they might have enough war potential. Casalia is stable. The Dark Labyrinth is the Dark Dragon's domain."

Though Vargas wasn't too detailed on the continent's situation, he didn't interrupt. There was no mistaking what Ria was trying to say.

"To begin with, the Mountain Range of Death is a protective barrier by itself. Same with the Large Inland Sea, throughout history the demon tribe has never invaded by crossing its waters, so it's probably fine to

disregard it.”

Then there were two places remaining.

“The problem is with the Istria Kingdom, there are small and medium sized cities around it.”

“Yeah. Istra’s known for civil wars... it’s far too useless. When the time comes there’s nothing that can be done but leave it to leave it to Oomori Woods’ elves. What we should work on now is definitely this area. The scattered city-states don’t have a collected war potential. They do however have considerable personal strengths.”

Ria struck down on the crude map.

The beastkin villages, the ogre villages, the dwarf villages, Labyrinth City, Jaeburg. There were even other areas.

“The Manesh Kingdom kills Dragons.”

“Tentatively, though there are only five kingdoms officially... well it’s fine. What’s necessary is to bring the scattered people together.”

“The Cordova Kingdom?”

Right, although Ria abhorred the Cordova Kingdom, it was probably the strongest faction on the northwest edge of the continent.

“Ignoring likes and dislikes, it’s a problem that Cordova is a militaristic power that rules by force.”

If they don’t include all of mankind, demi-humans as well, they wouldn’t be able to win against the demon tribe. Past history had proven it.

But even so, Ria thought about it.

If Cordova was left to rule, the ogres might side with the demon tribe once again.

For the beastkin, dog beastkin like Kobolds were on the demon tribe’s side. Though they were fundamentally demon tribe, there were many kinds of groups more open-minded than humankind. They weren’t things

to ridicule.

“Wouldn’t it be good for Casalia’s dominion to spread into this area?”

In terms of tolerance towards other races, Casalia Kingdom was a pretty excellent country, even Ria thought so. While it was her own country, her ancestors had done good work.

“I’d also thought about that, but if Casalia’s national power brought the area together, I think that Cordova would invade. Rather, I don’t want Cordova to have a reason to be openly hostile against Casalia.”

Vargas didn’t understand the meaning behind Ria’s words. He thought that the reason why the two countries didn’t fight was because there was simply another nation between them.

“The empire is gone. The war potential supporting Casalia for times of emergency is gone. If Cordova and Casalia go to war now, though I think that Casalia will be able to barely win, it would ruin both countries.”

Right, the empire was the immovable stone that defended the human race’s order.

The Labra Kingdom is in the southwest, but although its power was decreasing it had still kept its authority. There was a mutual understanding that the empire would support it in times of emergency.

While Ria believed it would be difficult for that country from here on, she returned to the problem at hand.

“In other words, my plan is to get the Dark Dragon Valis’ help, build a union between the ogre and beastkin city-states and with Casalia, confine Cordova’s movements, and fight against the demon tribe.”

A staggering sentence.

Unable to keep up, Vargas shut his eyes for a brief moment.

“... It might be natural since you’re an Ojou-sama, but you’re like a politician.”

“No, no. Politics is much more troublesome and subdued. I’m just talking about a strategy.”

Ria, who had been closely watching her father's work, understood that. But even if it was a strategy, it was a grand strategy.

"Is something like that possible? Making such a large, new country? I'd think there would be rebellion from leading them."

"There is that..."

Still, Ria thought there was no helping it.

"For now, I have an idea on uniting the ogres. I have fighting relations with the Ogre King."

Though Ria had surprised Vargas yet again, she didn't notice and continued thinking.

"Labyrinth City's mayor is also my acquaintance, so I think I know how to create an alliance with them. For this city, I want to leave to you, Vargas."

"Me!?"

Vargas instinctively shouted. Jaeburg was an oligarchy city-state. The position of mayor was rotated between distinguished families.

"Besides, I'm not saying you need to be a politician. Since you have the renown of Thunder's Fangs, I want you to explain the advantages of the alliance to the mayor. Aren't you acquainted?"

Vargas folded his arms and grumbled, though it's not like he didn't understand what she was saying.

He was definitely acquainted with the mayor, they'd drunk together at the bar. Though he wasn't softhearted, he was clever when it came to his interests.

"If we conquer the Dark Labyrinth, your fame will increase more. If it's your comment, the mayor probably won't be able to refuse it that quickly."

"Even so, do we need to meet the Dark Dragon? I don't think we do if it's just to talk."

As he digested their conversation, Ria probably should meet and speak to the mayor. If it was a princess of Casalia, she would be able to meet him normally.

“But even with that, I think various other problems would pop up...”

“Even if there is a problem, it’ll be useless if we can’t advance...”

His eyes weren’t filled with strong determination. Muttering that it couldn’t be helped, Ria sighed.

“Well, I’d like to go to a dwarf town, and I have business to do at a beastkin town, and of course there’s the problem of the human countries...” [4]

“You have it hard too huh.”

Vargas knew that compared to her, he had it easy.

If the demon tribe invaded during the Millennium, what would explorers do? Since they weren’t existences that belonged to a country, they also had the choice of just running away. However, guild regulations required forced mobilization during states of emergency, like when the city was attacked.

As for a demon tribe invasion, it could be nothing but a state of emergency.

Even if they could run away, Vargas didn’t want to run.

He only wanted to send his family to safety. However, he would remain. Born here, he would defend the town he grew up in. And fight, then die.

Exploration aside, Vargas didn’t think he would survive a war.

“Incidentally, it’s unrelated, but I’d like you to hear a story.”

Though he thought about a problem earlier, he’d restrained himself. But since Ria spoke unrestrained so far, she would probably listen.

“How are you so strong? I’d thought that those who reincarnate certainly do so by training proportionately in their previous lives, but...”

After being defeated by Ria, Shizuna was depressed. Though that could

be called a good medicine, he wanted to hear about it.

“Oh, that? Well, it’s already fine to talk about it since it’s you.”

She had already come to trust Vargas.

“There are two reasons for why I’m so strong, the first is reincarnating as you said just now. I’ve studied battle skills that have been handed down across centuries for around thirty years.”

Vargas nodded in acceptance. If that’s how it was, Shizuna being unable to be her match was understandable. Since she had reincarnated, it was like already being trained.

“Then there’s the other reason. My Gift. I don’t require much sleep or rest, and I am resistant to poisons and curses, that’s from my Gift.”

“Even your strong build and strength?”

“Yeah. The Gift’s name is [Dragon’s Bloodline]. I have the power of a Dragon. I’m not saying that I’ve fully mastered it yet though.”

Ria replied easily. Vargas was surprised when he heard ‘power of a Dragon’, humans were no match against a Dragon. Even heroes probably couldn’t win against a Dragon.

“So you being so fixated on the Dark Dragon, that has to do with your Gift?”

“Un, well there’s a sense of affinity with it, so I guess so?”

Though he might help simply because of her ancestors.

“For those that know of my Gift, even among my comrades, it’s just Serge. Please keep it a secret for now.”

“That kid? He also seems like he has a Gift.”

Since he had Identify, it shouldn’t be hard to find out. However, Serge had acquired Read Resistance magic during their journey.

What Vargas found curious was that among her group, Ria found Serge to be the most reliable.

She consulted Carlos and Lulu for general things and cherished Maal

the most. But when it was for important decisions, she would listen to Serge's opinion without fail.

In fact, Serge's opinions were often beneficial. Especially when they fought formidable enemies, he was surprised at how fast he would give help from using Identify. He couldn't believe his age matched his appearance from the judgements he gave.

"Well, you'll have to ask Serge about that. It's not something I should say."

That was the truth.

After that, the two talked about conquering the labyrinth for a while.

They would resume five days later. From there, they would sprint through the labyrinth.

Since she was invited, Ria came to Vargas' house for dinner.

After that, she taught sword lessons to his sons.

Eating his wife's delicious cooking, Ria recalled the taste of home cooked meals for the first time in a very long time.

*

Footnotes:

1. The 'Demon' here is Mazoku rather than Mamono. Still uncertain how to properly translate the differences given the story context.
Sorry. Return
2. Mazoku. Return
3. Again, Mazoku. Return
4. Not sure if she's talking about single dwarf/beastkin towns or more.
Return

Chapter 43: The Pursuer

The labyrinth conquering began.

They advanced through it at a furious pace.

Though their previous invasions were fast enough that it was impossible for them to be followed, this was even faster.

The reason was obvious.

Ria stopped restraining herself.

Left behind them were their previous enemies they had somehow or another cut down and defeated.

Although they were only careful around traps, although enemies used magic, although they spat venom at them, although acid soared through the air, although curses were placed on them, everything was nullified and disabled.

Groups of Iron Golems had their legs severed with a stroke of her katana, and with another to their chests they collected their magic stones.

The same with Basilisks' petrification gaze, it had no effect at all. They were cut down the same as ordinary Monitor Lizards.

Swarms of Ghosts were extinguished with blasts of magical power.

Insect-type demons were burned by fire magic.

Same for Giant Slimes.

When they were attacked from all sides by Giant Bats, with a flourish of her katana, all that remained were ruined bats with their heads flying through the air.

Even demons that had fur of steel, they were killed through their steel.

"The blade's nicks... none, good, good."

In just a single day, the group had went up to the tenth floor.

"Nee-chan, aren't you really overworking yourself?"

Serge whispered to her when they prepared camp.

Since he could understand the other member's conditions with Identify, they could take a break even if they themselves said they could keep going. Though since Identify doesn't work on Ria, he asked her quietly.

"Ah, I'm fine. More importantly, are you alright Serge? This is a pretty extreme speed."

Among them, Serge and Lulu had no endurance. Particularly with Serge's age, his numerical endurance and stamina were the lowest.

"I can get on Rudolph so..."

Though she thought that Rudolph the Hellhound would have to be pushed on at the start, he was an indispensable existence now.

He had a pretty high fighting strength, but in this labyrinth it didn't amount to much. He was amazing as a means of transportation though.

Even with Serge and Lulu on his back, he didn't sway even a little. It was obvious that he could pull a wagon, but he also had high output strength and durability.

Moreover, his senses exceeded the beastkin Shar and Maal's, informing them of assailants.

If he wasn't there, they probably wouldn't be moving at even half their current rate.

"But do we have to hurry there? It's not a problem of capability, but mental health."

The same thing she spoke to Vargas about had also been told to Serge.

"I'm not in any particular hurry, does it look that way?"

Looking at it, it was dangerous either way. Impatience and openings went hand in hand.

"Though Nee-chan doesn't look like she's in a rush, aren't the other people a bit maxed out?"

"I see. Maybe I'll drop the pace a little?"

Making preparations while saying so, everyone began to eat.

Ria just maintained her katana.

She confirmed that there were no problems with the blade. However, it felt like there was a slight sense of incompatibility in her hands.

After creating Nagasone Kotetsu, a huge amount of demons had been cut down. Even though it was strengthened through magic, it had phenomenal stamina. As expected of a Japanese sword said to be the strongest in her previous world, it could only be classified as a first-rate sword.

Incidentally, though the blade was completely fine, the guard and handle was remade with her genesis magic. Certainly, the original held a magnificent art value, but since there was a problem in its strength, it was now a boorish metal hilt wrapped in mithril fibers.

“Are the rivets on the hilt worn out...?”

It felt a little out of place. She took out a spare hilt and replaced it.

“Hey, that curved blade.”

Shizuna asked while chewing on hardtack. It didn’t look elegant at all.

“Without being a magical item, can it still cut well? Is there a trick to it?”

“A secret... secret huh? Well, it’s not something like a secret.”

It was a long story. However, she didn’t want to talk about the details. It was a dilemma.

“A long time ago, in the out skirting islands to the east, there was a country named Japan.”

Though it might still be there, it’s not in this world.

Serge’s laughter could be heard in the background.

“Then, they developed this curved blade called a katana. It didn’t break, it didn’t bend, and it could cut very well. It was the ultimate Japanese sword.”

“Oooh, so dwarves made it after all?”

As a warrior, she was interested in weapons. Shuzina threw in another question.

Common sense in this world said that good weapons were made by dwarves. Things excelling that could only be sacred treasures.

“No, they were humans. This katana in particular was made by a skilled artisan named Kotetsu. I got this in Labyrinth City.”

She didn’t tell a lie.

“Aah, can I see it for a moment?”

When Shizuna said that, Serge’s and Lulu’s faces stiffened.

They knew just how much Ria was attached to katanas.

Even if that wasn’t the case, warriors didn’t let others touch their weapons that often.

“Don’t touch the blade directly. Also, try to not breath on it as much as possible too!”

That’s why Ria’s actions were unexpected.

When she unwrapped the cloth covering the blade, she handed the hilt part to Shizuna.

“It’s unexpectedly solid, and delicate.”

“There’s no magic in it after all. Since it can rust, maintenance is needed.”

“Heeeh... pretty...”

“It’s beautiful right? Though since it’s this beautiful, it can also be decorated not as a weapon, but for appreciation as well. It’s a shame.”

In that area, this world had the same circumstances. Although since this world had actual combat, most things were made for practicality.

“Hmm, I wonder if I could use it a bit too?”

Though Shizuna’s weapon was a long sword, her curiosity gushes forth

when it comes to cutting things.

“In that case, I’ll teach you. Already, you should pay attention to your waist.”

“Ah— stop it!”

Shizuna retreated.

It was quiet.

There was just the sound of the fire crackling, though it filled the cave.

You couldn’t hear the sound of everyone’s breathing after having fallen asleep.

There were three people on lookout, Ria, Cell, and Lulu.

Added on to that was Rudolph’s beastly senses. It was likely impossible for any kind of demon to launch a surprise attack on them.

At that time, even though Ria felt it, there was no presence.

A gaze.

Even if it concealed its hostility, murderous intent, and presence, that wouldn’t erase the feeling of being watched.

Katana in hand, she stood up.

Using light magic at the tip of her finger, she drifted it towards the passage.

“What’s wrong? An enemy?”

Cell asked her, but Ria didn’t even know.

Since Rudolph was sound asleep, there shouldn’t be any danger. However, something felt off.

“It feels like... there’s a person.”

Ria went towards the passage as though she was gliding. Further ahead, though the ball of light continued to shine, there wasn’t the shape of a person.

“Other explorers?”

Ria didn't answer Lulu's inquiry.

When explorers met in the Dark Labyrinth, they would keep away from each other as much as possible. That was standard protocol in the Dark Labyrinth.

"... It disappeared."

Returning to where she was, Ria sat down.

She didn't know if it was her imagination. She didn't know exactly what it was.

However, there was an uncomfortable feeling of death in the labyrinth.

"There might have been something there, but I don't feel it now."

"The spirits aren't warning me of anything in particular."

In a sense, Cell's detection capability was higher than Rudolph's. Detection through spirit magic. Even that hadn't reported anything.

However, there was a fatal hole in Cell's detection.

In the case where the enemy far exceeded him in using spirits, detection through magic would be ineffectual.

(Annoying.)

She had erased her figure, her smell, her sound, and her heat.

Even so, somehow, that girl sensed her.

Her skin was too white from the aesthetic sense of a dark elf, and she perceived her with an ability that went beyond the five senses.

(In the end, there's nothing that can be done but to meekly follow her then?) That was her original purpose in the first place.

Boasting the highest degree of difficulty on the continent, the Dark Labyrinth.

It's said that only a single person had ever conquered it. In a certain meaning, she was even more unreasonable than Ria.

Chapter 44: The Gatekeeper

The labyrinth conquering advanced smoothly.

Since they knew the way to go, they naturally went with the shortest route. They didn't completely map it out.

Another reason they were progressing so well was because the demons they had struggled against before hadn't revived.

In this respect, it was different from the Immortal Labyrinth that was managed by Labyrinth. Just being able to gradually decrease the danger was preferable.

Still, the Cerberus and Mithril Golem that appeared weren't enemies to joke around with.

"Hyaaahah—! Skin off its mithril—!"

Serge ran around in glee from the remains of the Golem that was repelled by his magic.

However, mithril only coated its surface. Its insides were standard iron.

It had been one week since they entered the labyrinth.

The group had reached the fiftieth floor.

This was obviously a different floor than those up till then. More than anything, the ceiling was tall. Its height was reminiscent of Casalia's royal castle.

In other words, it was time for flying enemies to appear. Things that even Giant Bats were no match for.

"A Gargoyle...? An annoying enemy that looks like it'll damage my katana..."

For the stone statue flying in the sky, Ria countered with a warhammer.

However, a Gargoyle was a demon that was much more agile than something like a Wyvern. Attacks from a warhammer wouldn't hit.

Moreover, since it was flying in the air and firing fireballs from its

mouth, their warriors had a bad compatibility with it.

“I can see it, it’s Level 120!”

Serge shouted out. At first, he was negligent and didn’t think he would need to use Identify on something like a Gargoyle or a Golem.

To make matters worse, this Gargoyle had defensive magic painted on its surface, nullifying most ordinary magic.

As for Serge’s Excalibur, it didn’t hit due to the enemy’s quick movements.

Rather than a Gargoyle, it was already an enemy at the level of being a Gargoyle-sama.

“I guess it’s the gatekeeper after all!?”

Placing acceleration on himself, Serge desperately evaded the fireballs. He hid behind Vil’s tower shield.

“There’s a pretty good possibility of it!”

Ria also avoided being directly hit by the fireballs. Though it would really just be a little hot with no damage, she wanted to be pardoned from fighting half-naked if possible.

“Ria! Give back my sword!”

Shizuna shouted. Certainly, if she had her Blazing Snake Sword, it would probably be effective in this situation.

“Here.”

Vargas took the sword out of his magic bag and passed it to her.

As if to ask why he had it, Shizuna was momentarily stunned.

“I planned on returning it from the start. Reflect on it.”

She had actually received another magic sword after that though, so nothing changed.

“Alright! With this—!”

The sword she was accustomed to back in her hands, Shizuna shouted.

“Warp!”

The garian sword extended, twining around the Gargoyle. However, it folded its wings and accelerated.

Even with its lashing movements, the Gargoyle was unable to be captured.

“Oooh!”

With a yell, Vargas swung his greatsword.

He emitted a thunderous shock wave. Worthy of his sword flash being called thunder, it slammed the Gargoyle into the ceiling.

Even with that though, it didn’t destroy the Gargoyle’s body. It stretched out the limbs it had collapsed towards itself, flying through the air once again.

Though the Gargoyle’s fireballs weren’t that strong, they looked as though they barely consumed any magical power. Moreover, it could rapid-fire them.

“Even though ordinary Gargoyles are small fry—”

“Oi, mage, find some other way to hide!”

Since Serge was hiding there, Vil couldn’t move. He couldn’t do that and protect him with the shield.

Cell and Maal protected them from fireballs with water-type spirit magic. Though Lulu and Jason were also cooperating to erect a magical barrier, they didn’t have the resources to return fire.

“It can’t be helped huh. Guess I gotta use my new trump card!”

“Use it sooner if you have something like that!”

Ria also slipped behind Vil’s shield to hide.

“I call it Unlimited Short Blade Works, but I wonder if there’s a problem with copyright?”

“No idea.”

Serge concentrated and composed the magic. Around the boy floated an innumerable amount of small masses of magical power.

Seeing a chance to attack as the Gargoyle was slightly interrupted, he dashed out from behind Vil's shield.

"Fire!"

Nearly one hundred distortions in space assailed the Gargoyle.

They were small blades. Each one didn't do much damage. Though there was a massive amount of them and it couldn't evade them.

With its stone wings crushed, the devil stone statue fell to the ground.

The warriors were then able to flood over it.

"I've... never seen that color before."

Vargas had taken a black magic crystal out of the destroyed Gargoyle's body.

Standard magic stones were dark red, and though magic crystals also had the same colors, this one had no red at all.

"Maybe magic crystals so close to the Dark Dragon's residence are black? I feel a strong darkness power from it."

Jason wanted to do a thorough analysis, but that wasn't possible for the time being.

Then, even though they believed the Gargoyle was the gatekeeper, they continued to be attacked by demons.

Though the flying demons were troublesome, insubstantial demons were even more annoying.

"These aren't demons. They are spirits."

Making use of masses of fire, Cell confronted them alone.

Facing against the flame, they locked eyes. Neither side moved and a long time passed.

When the other members started to talk about using ice magic from the

side, they disappeared.

“If they are spirits, I can do it with a bit of time somehow. Please leave them to me.”

If they didn't have a comrade that used spirits, they probably would have been checkmated here.

Even though they were flying demons, Gryphons and Wyverns were easy opponents.

Ria and Vargas' attacks were almost enough to end their lives in a single attack, Carlos and Shizuna also made use of their magic swords' traits.

The other warriors weren't good-for-nothings, defending the rear guard mages became a huge role in wide spaces.

Then, the group finally arrived before a huge gate.

They were in a huge room.

From the moment they entered, they could see a huge gate far ahead of them.

Even the Cyclops that was in front of the huge gate before would have room left over.

A living thing was there.

With pale yellow, ivory-white scales.

Two short and sharp horns.

Two wings much too small for its body.

It was a Dragon.

With its length of around ten meters, it was probably still a young Dragon.

Its belly swelled regularly, the sound of breathing coming from its nose.

Despite the group drawing closer, the Dragon slept peacefully.

“Oi, you.”

Without reservation, Ria hit the side of its face.

The huge head shifted sideways.

“Eh? Ah, ooow!?”

The Dragon spoke.

It was a high pitched voice. Definitely still a young dragon after all.

Its eyes that stared at them were pale green, beautiful as jewels.

“People came here after so much trouble and you’re just sleeping peacefully. I think you weren’t thinking about being killed with a surprise attack.”

The Dragon stood up on its hind legs and looked down at Ria, who had attacked it with her hand and proudly puffed her chest out.

It moved quickly. It was hard to think that with its huge body, it was around Rudolph’s speed.

“S-sorry.”

The Dragon apologized!

“Well, it’s fine. So, is the Dark Dragon Valis beyond here?”

“Ah, yes. Ah, one moment please.”

The Dragon folded its arms and thought.

“Ummm, you went through a lot of trials, good job making it here, adventurers...?”

It spoke as though embarrassed. That last part was a question.

“If you want to meet Dark Dragon Valis-chan, show me your strength!”

Valis-chan!

Chan!?

They lost a bit of strength for some reason. Maybe it was some kind of magic?

“To show my strength, is it fine to just hit you again?”

Excited to let out her fighting spirit, Ria asked. The heck, the Dragon is... isn't it frightened?

"Ah, no, you're already good."

The Dragon backed up a little. It rubbed the cheek that got hit.

"For those that want to advance, they fight with me. When I admit they are powerful to some degree it's fine."

Somehow, that was a bit strange.

Ria was the only person that needed to meet with the Dark Dragon Valis to begin with.

"Yeah, question?"

Having recovered from his boredom, Serge raised his hand.

"Yes, go ahead."

"Is it fine if I wait here?"

"I don't mind, it's fine to send you back to the surface."

"Eh? Then I wouldn't be introduced after all..."

The Dragon tilted its head to the side. It was strangely charming.

"That's right huh? Then if you could make it here, you should be strong enough."

According to Serge's Identify, the Dragon was only Level 77.

However, its ability values exceeded almost all of the demons they had faced. It was even higher than that Gargoyle's from earlier.

Frankly speaking, it didn't look like they would be able to win without Ria.

"But Valis-chan would get angry if I ignore orders, so let's fight after all. We'll pull punches a bit and go easy on each other."

The Dragon had an indescribably small fighting spirit. In order to rouse himself, Vargas spoke.

"Well, it's a rare chance to fight against a Dragon isn't it? Since you say

you'll be going easy... is it alright?"

He looked back to the members following behind him. Though they expressed complicated expressions, no one disliked the idea.

"Is it fine if I join in?"

"Please don't. I don't want that pain again."

Ria's request was flatly refused.

"So then, how about it?"

"Let's go."

Though it was delayed, the battle against the Dragon began.

Chapter 45: The Dragon

What were Dragons? The strongest beings.

Not living thing. Beings. In other words, they had power that exceeded spirits and gods.

Created from the world itself, they overthrew the gods that ruled over everyone. Existences that could destroy the world.

And yet, those beings protected the world.

Originally, those beings sided with neither humans nor the demon tribe. That was the Dragons.

When they rarely appeared in history, they were pests that destroyed human countries.

In most cases, though they were problems for humans...

However.

Vargas doubted if something that strong could really exist.

He'd fought Sub-Dragons like Flying Dragons and Earth Dragons many times. And nowadays, excepting very old Sub-Dragons, he could defeat them without much trouble.

In addition, he had reliable comrades. The comrades he'd fought together with for ten years, as well as the newbies, they were very reliable.

No matter what kind of demon it was, he believed that with his comrades, they would be able to win by fighting.

Their opponent was a very young Dragon.

Ten meters long, it was even smaller than a still-growing Earth Dragon.

Therefore, he made light of it.

Not killing each other. Even its condition to fight was that.

He didn't take it seriously. He was foolish.

“Oooo~w!”

Receiving Vargas’ greatsword, the Dragon counterattacked with its tail.

The counter was a reflex from the pain. Therefore, it wasn’t able to hold back.

Vargas, who had properly strengthened himself to the limit with magic and Skills, was hit by the blow and went flying.

His armor creaked, his bones broke, and his internal organs were shredded.

“Ouch~! That hurt~!”

The Dragon noisily rolled around as it raged, flicking away all of the surrounding warriors.

Their magical defenses disappeared from the movements that looked pretty much like a temper tantrum.

Their physical defenses, strengthened by Skills, were like sheets of paper.

No one died, though that was likely due to luck.

The ones left safe were the mages, Shar, Mal, and Shizuna. Rudolph too.

If the members weren’t wearing strong metal armor, they would have died instantly.

Recovery magic was sent to the warriors that sustained severe injuries.

As for those who stood up after recovering, it was only Vargas.

“Uuu~, ooow~”

Likely due to subsiding the pain from raging around for a while, the Dragon plopped its belly on the ground.

Then, it finally noticed the situation around it. It spoke with an embarrassed voice.

“I’m sorry. Are you alright?”

The mages who were giving treatment were amazed at how worried its

voice sounded.

Ria was the only person fired up.

“As expected, want to fight with me?”

“Don’t wanna. Too painful.”

If you looked at the place Vargas drove his whole body’s strength into, the scales were cracked. But that was all. He hadn’t reached flesh at all.

“It really was an accident, no one died right?”

Kyoro? The Dragon tilted its head. Seriously, such a human action. It was pretty cute. Even though it was large, it seemed like a small animal.

While Ria also helped out recovering the warriors, it kept peeping on the situation.

Everyone finally regained their senses, lining up in front of the Dragon.

The fight was left as completed. Mainly because it didn’t look like they’d be able to win.

“Hey, Dragon-san. Are all Dragons as strong as you?”

“I’m the same as a growing Dragon. Dragon children are usually weaker.”

Its tone was friendly. Maybe due to the fight?

Taking a good look, it really was a cute Dragon. Its nose was round and had button eyes.

“And you’re not the usual?”

The Dragon nodded at Vargas’ question.

“Since my father is Clarice-chan and my mother is Valis-chan, I was born strong.”

They hear a marvelous thing.

Who was Clarice? The Golden Dragon, Clarice. Who was Valis? Undoubtedly the Dark Dragon, Valis.

Dark Dragon Valis was its mother.

Mother?

That incongruity threw off all of them, forgetting they were in the presence of a Dragon of elite lineage.

Casalia Kingdom's Founder Leyte Anaia was a woman. There was no doubt about that. Portraits and sculptures remain.

She became Dark Dragon Valis' wife, giving birth to the child who became the king of the second generation. It wasn't a legend, it was written in the history books. The person in question had left words about it, too.

"Valis-sama was my only husband."

It had properly remained in the public records.

Ria was the one to ask.

"Can I have a moment?"

"Ah— yes."

Maybe it was still afraid? The Dragon used polite speech for Ria.

"The Dragon named Valis is beyond here?"

"Dragons don't generally have names. To associate with humans, we do accept names though."

The answer differed a little from the question.

"Well, the Dragon that is called the Dark Dragon Valis by humans, that is your mother?"

"That is correct."

"But my ancestor's father was Dark Dragon Valis."

"What's strange about that?"

The Dragon once again tilted its head. Was it aiming for something? Being so cute.

"Because, if that's how it is, the Dark Dragon Valis is both a father and a mother."

“So your ancestor was produced as a father, then I was given birth as a father.”

The Dragon said something odd in a tone that seemed natural.

Then, Serge came up.

“You know, Nee-chan.”

Despite having the smallest body, he was probably the brightest of them. His way of thinking could leap ahead.

“Maybe Dragons are hermaphroditic creatures?”

“””Ooh!”””

Everyone called out in amazement.

Hermaphroditic. In other words, it had both a penis and a vagina.

“Is that it!?”

“Sorry, I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

They didn’t get the Dragon’s approval.

“So in order to get the Golden Dragon’s bloodline to make me, he turned from a man into a woman to be a mother and father.”

“Are you a clown fish!?”

Though it was Serge’s turn to shout this time, only Ria understood what he was talking about.

Ria, who had seen government broadcasts from her previous life, knew about it.

Clown fish changed genders depending on their environment to make children. That much be it.

“Aaaaaah!”

Then, Ria understood.

She cried out involuntarily.

“I see, so it was something like that...”

She fell to her knees. She understood. Why had she reincarnated as a woman?

Why had she reached fourteen years old without menstruating? She understood.

This body that looked like a woman wasn't actually female.

"Kuaaah!"

She stood up. Even the members who were accustomed to Ria's eccentric actions hadn't seen her like this up to now.

Ria turned towards the Dragon, looking at it with a serious expression.

"Hey, by some chance, are all Dragons usually female?"

"Of course that's—... ah, are humans different? Looks different."

Dragon-sans were all female.

"H-how do they become male!?"

"Eh, I don't know. I still can't breed."

Ria fell to her knees again. However, it seemed an answer was near.

A faint laugh leaked from her lips.

"Let's go! A little more! I can do it!"

She vigorously stood up. Her ups and downs couldn't be followed by anyone else.

"I want to talk to Dark Dragon Valis! Now! Open the gate!"

"Ah— yes."

While overawed, the Dragon uttered an incantation.

The huge gate finally opened.

Chapter 46: The God Dragon

There was a vast space.

It would be wrong to call it a cave.

It could probably contain many towns the size of Anise. The Cyclops wouldn't have been able to reach the ceiling even if it tried.

In that dark room, there was a mountain.

No, a Dragon the size of a mountain.

A neck stretched up from that mass of black. It was too big.

Jet black scales. Golden eyes.

Just its head alone would rival the Cyclops' size.

To even think that something that ridiculously large could exist was ludicrous.

Dark Dragon Valis.

With a single glance, the group stopped moving.

Their hearts and lungs stopped moving. Dying. Death.

"Sorry."

Its words were like a coercive pressure, making the group prostrate themselves on the ground.

"Be at ease."

With those words, the pressure disappeared. They could move. Move away from death.

A short while passed while their bodies once again began to send oxygen back through themselves.

Even Ria wasn't able to move, it was as though she had been tied down.

"It's been such a long time since I have met mortals. I forgot about adjusting."

Her just talking normally could kill living things. She held that much

power. That was a God Dragon.

In the age of legends, they finished their dispute against the gods to overthrow heaven and earth, and were now this world's absolute guardians.

“Wait for a moment.”

She was restraining her power. They had no choice but to wait if she said so.

“Matching a human, it's difficult.”

The mountain wiggled.

It undulated. It surged.

The black mass gradually shrank.

Ria relaxed the hand she had unintentionally placed on the katana at her waist.

Really, she hadn't realized when.

That freak—no, the thing that rivaled a god, was she planning on fighting it?

Before she noticed it, the mountain had disappeared.

In the dark area in front of them, she heard footsteps.

Before long, a beautiful woman entered Ria's view.

With black hair and golden eyes. Her skin was white, black cloth casually covering her nakedness.

Her face was similar to Ria's.

No, if Ria were several years older, her face would probably look like hers.

“Welcome, to my residence.”

Her voice was a female human's. There was none of the earlier pressure in it.

“It's different. Our residence? Human speech has changed a little since

then... have I made a mistake?" [1]

She was unexpectedly humble.

Was the overwhelming presence earlier unneeded swaggering?

Valis turned around. The cave's walls, filled with lots of holes— There were countless dragons in them.

They gasped. They were each around one hundred meters long. An innumerable number of them slept in the holes along the wall.

Hundreds? Thousands?

More?

"Only when the world approaches destruction shall we truly awaken. For the degree of a Millennium, although we originally should not need to stir, I have a pact with Ryuke Riana. Among the Black Dragons, only myself shall support the humans."

Of course, the Ryuke Riana she mentioned was the Militant Emperor.

Valis waved a hand. Enough chairs were created from the floor for each person.

"Have a seat. Myself as well, I must borrow the humans' power."

Saying so, she also sat down. She created the chairs in a circular pattern. Since Ria sat down directly, the others also did the same.

"Now then, what would you like to talk about? Is it the matter about Clarise?"

Valis' eyebrows knit together. Her method of expression felt similar to a human's.

"Quite recently, humans—no, it's we now, eliminated the God Dragon named Clarice."

It was more than a month ago, but she said quite recently. Her time span seemed very different from a human's.

"We do not know the cause. Rather, although we know, I don't have the words to describe it to you all. The concept doesn't exist in human

language. At any rate, with a strong Demon King and Hero, if both cooperate, it may have been feasible.”

Valis meant that it was very unlikely.

The Demon King cooperate with the Hero?

“The world has begun to distort thanks to that. Due to this situation being fortunately foreseen to some extent, measures had been taken. Between myself and Clarice, a new God Dragon was born. However, that one is still young.”

Valis pointed towards the infant Dragon gatekeeper.

“We must raise it. For that, I had to bring it out of my residence. Defending and bringing up the infant is your role.”

Next, she pointed at Ria.

“You are a person who holds the Dragon’s Bloodline. A person who has received the blessings of a separate world’s gods. One who can kill gods.”

She fixed her eyes on Ria. From the beginning, she hadn’t so much as looked at the other humans.

“You having chose this world, that is the first reason.”

“Iii—iii!”

Her voice came out. A bit.

“I chose the blessing myself. I didn’t know that chose the world!”

She shook her head.

It was the power of rule.

The Dark Dragon’s words had bound Ria.

“Perhaps I spoke incorrectly. You came to this world due to the [Universe’s Law of Causality].”

Serge’s body trembled.

Because, the words spoken by the Dark Dragon included Japanese.

Just like Labyrinth, was the Dark Dragon a reincarnated person?

He was convinced that wasn't it. He thought there must be a different reason.

"Next topic. You were born a Dragonslayer."

Valis changed the subject. They were confused, how could they keep up?

"Power that goes beyond a human body. Although it is not a big deal for me, it might be an important thing for you all."

Valis took the attitude of not caring much about it.

"A Dragonslayer is a person who has more power than a Dragon. A person equal to the Hero and the Demon King. If you make a mistake in handling them, the Millennium's order will be lost, and will lead to a large collapse."

Valis retraced her memories. The Dragonslayer that was born before, a memory of Ryuke Riana.

Despite having the power to kill a god, she abandoned it to live as a person for that human.

"In order to protect yourself, do your best."

She wondered what sort of conclusion the humans in front of her would produce.

"Though it's a third thing, it's related to this world's order."

Here, Valis sighed and seemed to tire.

"My soul will soon wear out."

That meant the death of a person.

"Afterwards, for the role of protecting this world... I request it of you."

As for who Valis was watching, it was only Ria. She hadn't requested this from anyone else.

"That is the second reason why you chose this world."

A convenient story.

Moreover, she spoke as though the story was already over.

No one spoke at all.

This wasn't a place for a person to talk. This wasn't a place for reckless explorers.

This wasn't a place for a person to live, the small humans knew that.

"Well, only I have talked so far. Let me hear you all."

The overwhelmed humans, as though forgetting how to speak, were just trying to survive.

Excluding one person.

"There's one thing I want to ask."

Only Ria was able to resist this place's pressure.

"It's said you Dragons will become a man to start a family. I want you to teach me the method."

"Naturally."

A prompt answer.

In desperation, Ria had asked the question as though she were preparing for death. She was given a complete response.

"When the season matures, if we sincerely love someone, we can breed. Similar to humans."

At that moment, Ria had an incredibly peculiar expression.

That is to say, Dragons know the feeling of love?

To begin with, just what is love?

"Do you not have someone you love sincerely?"

No.

She would say Maal if forced, but it was more of a familial love.

It wasn't love, it was more affection. Like she loved the sky, sea, and land, she loved Maal.

Of course, she loved Matsukaze too. She loved Rudolph too.

However, this wasn't that.

"Humans are living beings that can breed without love..."

Ria answered listlessly. She felt exhausted.

She felt like her everything was being denied. Of course, it was just a persecution complex.

"However, Anaia and I sincerely loved each other."

"Ah, is that so..."

She wanted to cry, but didn't show any tears. Because her mind was still a man's! ... Probably.

She'd consult Serge later. That's what she decided.

Because she decided, she didn't turn around anymore.

Her question was answered. Next was speaking her desire.

"I want you to lend me your power."

"For what would you use my power?"

"To unite the people on this land, to make it through the Millennium."

Right, that was the original reason she came.

However, after hearing Valis' story, how small-minded was that desire?

No, it's different.

It could be said that Ria was different.

For those doing their best to live, even if it was small, it wasn't vulgar.

"Very well. However, it is not possible to interfere with the human world. It would be equal to using a Dragon's fang to crush a single ant."

Valis stood up, compromising with Ria.

"I will award you my fang."

An enormous black fang even taller than Ria appeared in the room, piercing the floor.

“With your power, you should be able to forge the katana you desire.”

That fang certainly was the color of a mineral.

“With this, you can release your power.”

She gracefully extended her hand to Ria’s brow.

She could have avoided it if she wanted to. However, she felt that avoiding it would be a loss.

Her Crisis Perception wasn’t operating either. Valis was definitely not harboring any ill will.

The fingertip touched, it felt like an electric shock.

Although Ria should have had Paralysis Resistance, she was unable to move at all, falling down.

Very quickly, Ria lost her grasp on consciousness.

*

Footnotes:

1. First she says “waga “, then “warega “. “Wa” is used as “I” only in old historical films and the like in the contemporary. “Ware” is more plural. Both forms are currently used as showing ownership, ie “My/Our”. Sorry, I’m not proficient enough to explain wordplay like this... Return

Chapter 47: The One Who Fights Against God

“Ri—”

The one who moved, the only one who could move, was Maal.

“Ria-chan!”

She pointed the already-loaded crossbow from her waist at Valis. Right, at a god.

She could kill her with just her gaze. Everyone believed that. However, Valis was tolerant.

An arrow was let loose. It struck Valis’ clothing before falling down in place.

“Don’t panic, little one.”

Of course, Valis looked gentle as she expressed a smile.

A vast amount of magical power arose from Ria’s collapsed body, obscuring it.

Maal could see the phenomenon.

Among them, only Maal and Serge were aware of what was happening.

Magical power was materializing, covering Ria’s body. It took the shape of an egg with a black luster.

So that she could gain new power, she went into a chrysalis stage.

It was Labyrinth City all over again.

“Now then, I’ll give my blessings to all of you as well.”

Valis waved her hand. At that moment, everyone felt an explosive surge in their power.

According to Serge’s Identify, everyone was granted various Skills and ten levels in one go.

“Too much power would bring destruction after all. Just this much

should be fine.”

‘Just this much’ she said. Like it was trifling.

All Resistance, Ability Value Enhancement, Healing and Recovery Rate Increase. Abilities like that.

As expected of a god.

Compared to this, Labyrinth’s strength was just a tiny insect.

“Umm, I’m sorry.”

Maal bowed. She was flexible to the point that her forehead touched her knees.

Though she was reflecting on it, she had shot an arrow at a being equal to a god.

“Don’t mind it.”

Valis returned to her seat. Though she was the same as a god, the gods from Greek mythology couldn’t be compared to her generosity.

“Well, what will you do? I could return you to the surface if you have no further desires.”

The group looked at each other. They all looked puzzled.

In front of a god, what would you request?

Any kind of wish could be granted, but now that it came to it, they couldn’t think of anything.

“Excuse me.”

Timidly, Lulu raised her hand up.

“By some chance, could... Valis-sama revive someone from the dead?”

“I can.”

Valis’ tone made it feel like it would be no trouble to her at all.

“Though if it isn’t meaningful, the compensation is great. It depends on the conditions.”

“My grandfather died four years ago, can you revive him?”

“I can. Something like that isn’t difficult.”

“T-the price?”

“Come here.”

Valis beckoned for the timid Lulu to approach.

The fingertips that touched her forehead were cool.

“Your grandfather has already reincarnated. From here, tearing out his soul, replanting his scattered memories, regenerating his body, all are necessary to revive him. Do you wish for that?”

What Lulu wanted was nothing like that.

But she wanted to see him again. To meet him, and thank him for everything.

“No...”

Souls reincarnated.

Even civilians believed that, and Valis said it was true.

To bring back her grandfather from his new life for her own selfish reasons was something she wouldn’t do.

“U-umm...”

Pushed forward by his neighbors’ elbows, Gates stood up.

“My wife is sick, her condition has gotten back, so... could you... heal her?”

“I can. Come here.”

She said the same thing.

After returning, Gates would find that rather than recovering, his wife was even returned to her youth, but that was a story for another time.

In a similar fashion, everyone had their humble wishes granted.

Or they would be told what to do for them to come true.

Even things like immortality and perpetual youth would be trifling with Valis' power.

But sooner or later, those who asked for it would also come to beg for death.

So what they wished for was for wounds that wouldn't heal to be healed, or for their health to be restored.

No one sought money or fame. For these utilitarians, they thought it would be a waste.

Only Serge desired nothing.

No, his desire would be after this.

"Then, I will send you all back to the surface."

"Umm, could you send us to the town at the base of the mountain?"

Valis generously accepted Vargas' request.

"Umm, Ria-chan is..."

"For now, she will remain here. When she hatches, I will send my child to deliver her."

"Is it no good for me to wait here?"

Maal wanted to wait for her. Serge persuaded her last time so she returned by herself. This time she had to stay near her.

"That's fine."

"Then I'll stay too. You'll need food and water."

Serge gave a good reason, but there was something he still wanted to ask.

The still slightly dazed group of people were teleported out of the area.

"I might... be a little hungry."

"Here."

Maal started eating the bread Serge took out. Valis began to gently caress the horn of her child, who had snuggled up to her.

Thinking about it, since it was her genuine child, she would be as charming as her mother. Though the God Dragon's emotions could clearly be called cute, that much was expected from the love towards her child.

"Now then, young human."

Still looking at her own child, her voice was directed at Serge.

"You still have business with me?"

He was seen through. That much was a matter of course. Or maybe she could read peoples' minds? No, maybe it was natural to see through his thoughts?

"Yes, but I have a question first."

He wasn't as afraid as he was before. He was getting used to her, but that may have been due to him gaining resistances regarding abnormalities that influenced the mind.

"By some chance, are you a reincarnated person?"

"What is reincarnation, young human?"

Continuing, Valis spoke calmly.

"It could be called a robust soul transferring between frail bodies and minds many times over. Us Dragons remain in the same body until our souls wear down."

[Then, why can you speak Japanese?]

Maal was startled by the sudden language she didn't understand coming from Serge's mouth. But it was no matter, he wanted to ask this question.

[I have connected to that world many times. It isn't hard to remember the language.]

Valis replied, also using Japanese.

Serge was confused.

When he spoke with Labyrinth, he was told he couldn't return to his original world. He was plainly denied it.

And now, she said that she had done it many times.

Labyrinth had lived for one thousand years.

Her quantity of information was likely different than the Dark Dragon, who had lived for at least three thousand years.

[Actually, how long have you lived?]

[I don't know. However, a short time after this planet's birth, I gained self-awareness and just was.]

That was several billion years, or maybe even dozens of billions? When he compared it to Earth's history, he felt it was about that many years.

She wasn't a biological creature. Not even a god. An existence. She simply was.

Serge sighed.

When he realized he would reincarnate into another world, he was excited. Though it wasn't like he didn't have any attachments to his previous life, when he was told he was being given a new life, he was definitely glad.

The same as manga and novel protagonists, he dreamed of being peerless in magic. In reality, when he was about to be killed by an Orc, he was saved by Ria.

If this world were like a story, the protagonist would be Ria. Perhaps, if he didn't meet Ria, he might have been someone called a hero.

He wanted to play an excellent supporting role with them.

Then if things went well, find a beautiful wife!

... He had dreams like that.

Serge was practical, an ordinary human.

Even if he got natural talents in magic, his state of mind was different from the start.

And to some extent, the strength of his soul. Ria had somehow received 1012 Points, he understood why she could reincarnate into this world.

He first thought she was a cheat, but when he saw her fight with the Ogre King, and again against the Cyclops, he realized he was mistaken.

Even if Ria had nothing, she would be strong. There was no doubt.

While that may be true, he didn't want to abandon his own potential.

He didn't want to give up his own strength.

[Umm, Valis-sama.]

Although he dreamed of being a great mage going on risky adventures, he hadn't done it.

[Please give me a Skill.]

His wish was granted.

“Now, then next—”

Serge and Maal had returned to their seats and were watching the egg.

“I kept you waiting, come in.”

The two people turned towards the voice.

There was nothing.

No, they saw it.

“Spirit magic...”

Serge heard Maal's murmur. Twinkling, a figure appeared.

The hooded shape wore a sand-colored mantle.

An explorer. However, it was just one person.

Not even Ria would have been able to make it here alone. Even Ria had to rest.

The figure lowered their hood. Seeing its face, the two put themselves on guard without thinking.

Its beauty was like a sculpture. Brown skin, long silver hair. Long, thin ears.

“Dark elf.”

The one to murmur this time was Serge.

Dark elves were members of the demon tribe. They were known for having the most magical power among the demon tribe.

And... she had huge boobs.

Unlike elves, dark elves had huge boobs. It was actually common sense in this world.

The garments she wore under the mantle she took off were basically white, but her bulging breasts stood out.

“Pleasure to meet you, Dark Dragon Valis-sama.”

The dark elf knelt on the spot, sonorously calling out Valis’ name.

“I am His Majesty, the Demon King’s, retainer, one of the Demon Generals. I am called Ray Bradford.”

The instant he saw her, Serge used Identify.

Level 40.

Impossible.

Though Serge was no warrior, he could somewhat grasp the opponent’s strength with the combat experience he’d gained so far.

However, Identify was telling him that the dark elf right before him was Level 40.

Her ability values weren’t very high either. As for her Skills, they were scout-type Skills.

However, the being in front of him was at least stronger than Shizuna. It was something about her atmosphere. To begin with, it would be impossible to travel through the labyrinth with a level like that.

Accordingly, Serge used a higher ranked Identify from the grimoire he’d received from Labyrinth.

It was ineffective on the adult Dragons, but the magic could see Ria’s abilities.

At the time, he was surprised at her low level and disproportionate attribute values.

Divine Fathoming.

Though it still required a large portion of his magical power, Serge didn't hesitate to use it.

Then, he understood. The demon tribe was disguising her abilities.

Dark Elf-san was Level 138.

Rather than a scout, it was more like an assassin. No, judging from how she concealed herself, she didn't seem the type to fight head on.

But she was strong. There was no doubting that she was strong.

"So, do you have some business with me?"

Valis called out. She didn't have any emotion in particular in her voice. It was a member of the demon tribe, moreover one of the leadership.

"By the order of my lord, I am to investigate the human called Ria. But if you—"

The dark elf's voice blurred into being desperate.

"In the nearing Millennium, my lord wants to give his assistance."

"It's no use. Rather, that's impossible."

Valis' words were merciless.

"To start, I don't know what your lord is planning. Something like an ex-hero Demon King, there's only one in my memory."

Eh?

"W-waiwaiwaiwaiwait up a sec! Sorry for cutting in, but please hold up!"

Serge unintentionally plunged into the conversation. He was panicking. And surprised.

"Eh? As in the Demon King, king of the demon tribe? The one a hero is born or summoned from another world to defeat right? The heck's an ex-

hero Demon King!?”

Right, it was a tale that even kids in the country knew about.

In the Millennium, a hero would defeat the Demon King. They would defend humanity from the demon tribe's invasion.

Born after receiving the gods' blessings, or summoned by magic left behind by gods.

They would generally marry a princess in the end, spending their time in happiness.

There should be a hero. The Demon King should be defeated.

“One thousand years ago, a hero was summoned.”

In spite of her conversation being obstructed, Valis wasn't particularly offended.

“After defeating the Demon king together with Anaia, he became the next Demon King”

Saying just that much as though that was all, there was no doubting Valis' tone.

Chapter 48: The Conversation With a Demon

Towards the beastkin village, the story of the hero was handed down. It was like that for any village.

The evil Demon King was eliminated, repelling the cruel demon tribe. Villages would definitely hand that down.

Therefore, Maal's mind was blank.

She wasn't able to resist the absurd truth like Serge.

But Maal still kept listening to the developments.

"I don't understand."

Serge muttered in a small voice, but he still had some composure.

"You're telling me Demon King-sama was a good person? So, he defeated the previous Demon King..."

Still, that was in range of what he could understand. Knocking down his previous life's memories, where he read stories like that...

Intelligence was included in increased ability scores. Information was sorted and inferences were derived.

"Ummm, Dark Elf-sama, is it fine to call you that?"

The one Serge called out for wasn't Valis, but the Dark Elf. He spontaneously added the '-sama'.

The Dark Elf turned towards him with a look of being uninterested, but still responded.

"What?"

"That, the Demon King-sama, what sort of person is he?"

He spoke politely. He could be killed if he offended her. Though Serge's level had raised with a wave of Valis' hand, he still didn't think he could defeat the girl in front of him.

Serge's question seemed to satisfy the Dark Elf.

"He's a wonderful person."

With intoxicated eyes, she began to speak.

"Tender, yet strict at times. Unconcealed dignity, while friendly. He brought peace and order to the demon tribe with his great knowledge—"

"Well, wait."

Valis was the one to stop her.

"It is good you came here to speak. Fortunately, there are vacant seats."

Yeah, the Dark Elf had still been kneeling near the entrance.

She was a distance away. If push came to shove, he could use the distance to launch a preemptive strike with magic.

And Valis was trying to shorten it.

Maal was afraid. Though Serge also felt fear, if he used the Skill he just obtained a moment before, he could probably escape.

No, even that was no good. He wouldn't be able to include Ria. Though Valis felt like she would protect Ria, Maal probably wouldn't want to part with her.

Either way, Serge had no alternatives.

Slowly, the Dark Elf stepped forward.

She then sat at the position farthest away from Ria's egg.

"Excuse me, Dark Elf-sama."

"Wait, first off stop with calling me 'Dark Elf-sama'."

Though it seemed like a strange thing to fuss about, it would probably feel weird to be referred to as 'Human-sama' or 'Beastkin-sama' after all.

"Then what should I call you?"

"Ray. No need for honorifics. You are neither my vassal nor my subject."

She was amiable. If that was the case, this talk may go on better than

he thought.

Even so, he needed to be polite. Since she had introduced herself as a Demon General, she was probably part of the upper echelons of the demon tribe.

“Before anything, tell me your names.”

“Ah, Serge.”

Come to think of it, I hadn’t introduced myself. I was impolite.

“Maal.”

She gave a small bow.

“You guys, human tribe and beastkin tribe together? How old are you?”

It was a somewhat normal conversation.”

“Just turned thirteen.”

“Twelve.”

“Young huh. Then that magical power? Hey, feel like serving His Majesty?”

It suddenly turned into her scouting us.

“Umm, I’m with the human tribe though...”

“There are humans in demon territory too. His Majesty doesn’t discriminate between races. His Majesty was a human to begin with.

Humans!?

Though Serge retorted in his mind, it was probably normal for a former hero to be accompanied by humans.

Even so, she said he doesn’t discriminate between races. Wait, wasn’t it a better society than human society?

“There are cat beastkin too. I have a lot among my subordinated.

So cat beastkin too?

“Ah, though he’s human, Demon King-sama is a thousand years old?”

A human's life span, even assisted by magic, would max out around three hundred.

Then again, the Great Sage of Sacred Mountain, Azelford had exceeded one thousand years of age.

“Ah, that's my power.”

Listening in, Valis intervened into the conversation.

“That man's wish was for immortality.”

Immortal, but would eventually seek for death.

“It changed the man. Enduring for one thousand years with the strength of his will.”

Enduring, not living.

Humans weren't things that could endure living for so long.

If his state of mind was a problem, she wouldn't have been able to consent.

“That's... though I'm happy for your invitation, and though it's an attractive one... I still have a lot of things I want to learn.”

“That so? There are a lot of schools in demon tribe territory, so please come if you feel like it.”

Not compromising, she suddenly threw the thing in her hand over to him. It was a dagger with a seal on it. Ria also had something like it.

“If they see that, members of the demon tribe generally won't make a move on you. Though since there are a lot of hot-blooded tribes, you should take care.”

Too friendly. It was a very sweet invitation.

Serge was actually becoming worried.

“Umm, is it alright to give this away?”

It'd be bad if it leaked into human society.

“Apart from that beastkin, I don't feel any negativity from you.”

Though she did feel some fear, she continued.

Although Serge definitely thought Ray was a threat, it could have just been prejudice.

Of course, since he was thinking ‘Booby Dark Elf arrived—!’ the whole time, she might have sensed it as good will from him.

“A human like you would very likely become our comrade. It’s called a [speculative recruitment].”

Serge instinctively smiled wryly at Ray, who had used Japanese.

He couldn’t come to dislike this Dark Elf-san.

“So then, let’s continue.”

“Ah, yeah. Let’s see... for the Millennium, why does the demon tribe invade to begin with?”

With that question, Ray’s eyes narrowed as she let out a breath.

The feeling of a candid Onee-san from before disappeared. What was left was a member of the demon tribe who held a frightening strength.

“How much do you know?”

Overawed, Serge decided he would just say what he felt on it.

“Umm, with what I heard from the story a moment ago... with Demon King-sama, if humans and the demon tribe didn’t fight, I feel like they could get along.”

Right, that was what he felt.

To begin with, the ones invading during the Millennium were the demon tribe.

But hearing Ray’s story, he felt like the Demon King was the exact opposite of an evil existence that wanted to slaughter everything.

If that was the case, they didn’t need to prepare for the Millennium. Ria’s one worry would be lost.

Ray’s expression softened.

However, she shook her head.

“We will attack the human’s territory. This was decided.

“Can I hear why?”

“No. However, it will be revealed eventually.”

“It’s because the Millennium is necessary.”

Valis supplemented from the sidelines again, but what did she mean by ‘necessary’?

Speaking from memory of his previous life, just how many holy wars were carried out?

“Is that so... There are other things I’m wondering though...”

“Before long, we will meet again. We can talk at that time.”

Saying that, Ray stood up. It was the end of the conversation.

She glanced at the egg that surrounded Ria.

Maal got in her way on reflex. Ray gave a wry smile.

“I won’t harm you guys. At least for now, that is.”

There were no lies in her words. Destroying his concept of the demon tribe, he felt she was trustworthy. Not just Serge, but Maal too. They both felt it.

Meeting with Ray was fruitful. Though she cut away from them, they felt like they obtained something big.

“Wait.”

The one to stop her was Valis.

The one to call out was the owner of a godlike power, so Ray’s body stiffened. If she had committed a taboo here, she would lose her life instantly.

But Valis’ words were contrary to her expectations.

“I’ll give you a blessing as well.”

Valis waived. A moment later, Ray's magical power increased.

"The reward for traversing the labyrinth."

Lost for words, Ray embraced her body closely for a short while.

Before long, she bowed deeply. She put up the hood of the cloak she was wearing and started to walk toward the entrance.

"Want to be sent outside?"

Valis called out again.

"... Then, just outside town."

"Umu, good bye then."

With that, Ray's figure disappeared.

"Umm, was that alright?"

After a while, Serge spoke.

"Was what?"

"What you were talking about a bit ago, the disappearance of the Golden Dragon Clarice-sama. You said the Demon King could have been related, but you just returned his subordinate as normal?"

According to Valis' story, that person could have been an enemy.

But Valis didn't understand his question.

"It's already over."

Just a few words.

"Still, God Dragon-sama can't be resurrected?"

Maal was wondering that. Valis had said she could resurrect the dead.

"It's possible, but the price would be too great."

So she could huh.

Then what price would be too large?

Afraid, the neither of them asked.

One week later.

Serge had been striving to master his new Skill.

The Skill was powerful, and in exchange for supplementing the weak points of mages, it was difficult to control.

Unexpectedly, Valis would sometimes show him an example of a method to control it.

Maal was playing with the infant Dragon.

You could call it playing.

This Dragon that had been born a relatively little time ago was still a child mentally, so it was delighted.

It told Maal that it was much more happy now than it had ever been sleeping so far.

Then, while the two people and one dragon were absorbed amongst themselves—.

“It’s about time.”

Everyone gathered around the egg due to Valis’ voice.

The black shell cracked, spreading across it—.

“Uu...”

“Ria-chan!”

Her black hair waving, Ria made her appearance.

Chapter 49: A Name to be Called

“Oh...”

Breaking the eggshell, Ria’s entire body was exposed.

Unlike last time, she wasn’t nude. That was because the Cyclops’ gastric juices had melted her clothes that time.

Nevertheless, Serge shouted.

“Boobs!”

Her leather armor torn, Ria’s breasts were exposed.

“I-its somehow painful...”

Ria groaned, but it was no wonder.

“R-Ria-chan, didn’t you somehow grow amazingly?”

“Huh?”

Her limbs were longer. Her clothes were obviously short.

Her chest was in pain. It was absurdly painful.

“How’d this happen...”

She stood up. Her perspective had changed. Estimating from Serge and Maal...

“Around half a head’s worth of growth?”

This had happened before, but it was more obvious this time.

Above anything else, her chest hurt.

“Hah...”

Ria sighed. A big chest was obstructive for fighting.”

“Seriously... nuisances...”

Ria’s chest bounced as she took off her clothes.

Though Valis looked at her with somewhat reproachful eyes, she didn’t seem particularly timid.

She produced new clothes and armor with genesis magic. Adjusting the size was troublesome.

“Boobs! Boobs!”

Serge repeatedly called out ‘boobs’ while waving his hands.

She didn’t particularly mind, this was a Service Scene after all.

“Hmm, it hurts when I tighten it.”

“How about making something elastic like a sports bra?”

“Right... Why are you so well informed about women’s underwear?”

Setting aside Serge, who was now dodging the question by looking towards the day after tomorrow, Ria arranged her appearance and made a body-length mirror.

“Uu...”

She was around one hundred and seventy centimeters tall. Her hair went nearly to her waist.

Her eyelashes fluttered with her almond eyes. The color of her eyes were a mix of black and gold depending on the light.

Overall, she held the atmosphere of an adult. Despite all that, she hadn’t lost the feeling of a maiden.

“Beautiful...”

Ria looked admiringly at herself in the mirror for a while.

“Why am I such a beautiful woman...”

Though Ria was having an incredibly mortifying experience, there was nothing that could be done about it.

While she was vexed, Valis could somewhat grant her wish.

Though she had seen the beautiful katana Nagasone Kotetsu in her previous life, she was relieved since it went back to the hands of those who cherished it.

“So then, will you take this child?”

With a brazen attitude, Valis faced Ria. Her feelings of respect towards the god had already disappeared.

Defeat me if you can, it was that kind of defiant attitude.

“Umu, I can become your power.”

When Ria turned around, there was a beautiful girl.

The young girl was a Dragon until just a moment ago. ‘Could a Dragon be taken to the village?’, saying that view was natural, Valis simply changed her appearance.

She looked in the middle of her teens. As for her exact age, Valis didn’t seem to know. Since ten or twenty years was nothing for their race, it couldn’t be helped.

She had curly golden hair and pale green eyes. Her wide open eyes were adorable.

And to defend herself, she had plate armor made of orichalcum.

Right, orichalcum. Produced by a mother worried over her child, it was an armor at the level of being a sacred treasure.

And on her back was a sword that looked like it’d even be a bit hard for an Ogre to wield. It was also made of orichalcum.

Restrain yourself, God Dragon-sama.

“So, this child’s name is?”

With a sigh, Ria acknowledged taking her along. Well, she probably wouldn’t be a nuisance.

“Yeah, I can’t decide. She’ll be standing in as your older sister so you decide it.”

She was serious here.

To begin with, Ria had no naming sense.

Matsukaze and Rudolph were things she brought as knowledge from her previous life.

It'd probably be fine to name her after a woman from her previous life, but it was difficult.

A name that was originally Japanese wouldn't suit her, and no way would she name a woman Kiyomaro or Muramasa.

Though she thought of a European soldier's name like Joan, she rejected it since that person had a tragic end.

She had thought of naming her after a famous female warrior from the history of this world, but she gave up after being unable to come up with a suitable one for a Dragon.

And so, that's why she turned towards Serge.

"Eh, me?"

Though he said that, Serge was stumped. At any rate, naming a dragon was a lot harder than a game character. Dragon-sans could easily live for millennia, so he couldn't pick a bad name.

In truth, he had come up with many names, but Ria rejected them one after another. She wanted one that stuck.

After who knows how many, seeing her appearance of being covered in plate armor, a certain name came to mind.

"How about... Irina?"

"Hmm, not bad. Where's the name from?"

"It's the name of a female soldier that wielded a huge sword with plate armor."

"Ah, that's good."

Thus, her name was decided.

"How about a temporary last name? Irina Crystal. My younger sister."

"Irina."

"Irina."

"Congratulations, Irina."

“Congratulations, Irina.”

“Thank you.”

“A, umm, Nee-chan, I have a request about names.”

‘I want a name’, Serge started to say.

In truth, Serge got his name from the Edo period of his previous life. It was a name that felt like Yosaku or Hachibee.

“If I gave my full name to royalty, it would be hard to name myself impressively.”

“Well, I don’t particularly mind... Serge wants to have a different name from here on? Troublesome.”

Ria waved her hand towards Serge, who was nodding with vigor, and thought about it.

“Serge... Serge... how about Sergess? It feels more aristocratic.”

“Don’t want it! It feels like a perverted hero’s name!”

Since he rejected it so strongly, Ria was involuntarily overwhelmed.

“If that’s so... Serge... Sagi... ttarius. So, how about that? Long distance attacks are your strong point, so isn’t that good?”

“Sagittarius... the archer... I can use meteor attacks, that’s spot on!”

Serge shouted ecstatically.

Not the superman, not the leading role with a superpower, but able to rescue at a hair’s breath. It wasn’t a bad name at all.

“If you like, how about last name too? Sagittarius Crystal.”

“Eh! Is that okay!?”

“Yeah, Crystal was originally a commoner’s family name after all. It’s fine even if you introduce yourself in Casalia.”

Serge was excited. He brushed back his bangs with his hand a bit.

“I am Sagittarius Crystal. My close friends call me Serge.”

It seemed like it got a bit complicated.

“So Irina, take care of yourself.”

“Un, Valis-chan. I’m off.”

Smiling fondly at the girl’s lively response, Valis used teleportation magic.

Silence returned.

Valis exhaled. The next moment, a gigantic figure filled the room.

Valis thought them to be a fun group of people. Thinking about the humans that had come, they were the first since Anaia.

Though she wouldn’t live long, she wouldn’t forget them to the last minute. For Valis, remembering was love.

However.

Valis’ precognition informed her. Other than Irina, she would definitely meet Ria again.

And at that time, she would very likely fight to her utmost at that time.

The vision wasn’t complete. Just like she wasn’t able to completely see Clarice’s disappearance, she couldn’t grasp all of Ria and Irina’s future.

If that sort of future arrived, she would leave the cave herself. And perhaps, the other three God Dragons as well.

Maybe she could meet those humans she missed? If she could, that would be good.

(Is Shifaka still alive? Kuo obviously...)

While recalling their faces, Valis entered a shallow slumber.

Chapter 50: The Clear Afternoon

The wagon shook.

Pulled by the Hellhound, their wagon shook as it went down the road.

“Gata gata~”

“Goto goto~”

Maal and Irina were singing as they leaned out from the wagon.

This was the first time Irina had seen the outside world, so everything she saw was new for her.

Maal was describing everything to her.

If Ria was her big Onee-chan, Maal was her small Onee-chan.

For a Dragon like Irina, there wasn't much of a difference between a human and a beastkin. Maal, who affectionately played with her, was simply her Onee-chan.

Inside the wagon, Serge looked through his grimoire, trying to master his Skills.

Gig was training his grip strength with a hand gripper that Ria made.

Ria, Carlos, and Lulu were all swaying on the backs of their horses and donkey.

Skipping some important times, there a redheaded girl sat alone in a gloomy mood in the corner of the wagon.

“How did it turn out like this...”

It was Shizuna.

She'd whined to herself many times now. As a reflex to her dark mood, Serge sang out, 'Dona dona'. [1]

Yeah, she was sold by her own father.

Returning from the Dark Labyrinth, Vargas had become a hero.

He was a warrior from a famous party to begin with, and after clearing

the Dark Labyrinth he brought back an orichalcum greatsword that could be called a sacred treasure.

Unlike the other members, Vargas' wish was easy to be granted.

After that, Ria was caught up in a vortex of people similar to like what happened in Labyrinth City.

From the mayor who they had already been acquainted to, to local nobles and celebrities, everyone wanted to become acquainted to them.

So Ria, who had returned late, talked about the villages working together for the Millennium.

One way or another, it turned into a serious discussion. No matter what though, whether they liked it or not, Jaeburg would become the front line of humanity when the Millennium took place.

During that difficult discussion, Ria had an even more difficult problem.

The first thing that had to be taken care of before all else... Matsukaze's well-being.

Matsukaze had been left alone for more than half of a month. Though there were of course other people taking him for walks, that was a separate issue.

That horse had a high pride.

She ran together with him in a nearby meadow, washed his body, and brushed him, taking up the whole day.

Then she exchanged information with Serge.

The Demon King-sama may be a good natured person, but for now their countermeasures for Cordova hadn't changed.

They would meet that sexy dark elf sooner or later.

Their plans hadn't changed.

For now, they decided to return to Labyrinth City and collect some more information, as well as deciding on which day to leave Jaeburg.

Vargas came over to where Ria's group was staying at the inn.

In his hands was the figure of Shizuna, caught in his hands by the nape of her neck like a cat.

“Please this one too.”

Vargas said that.

Vargas had already said himself that he wanted to take his family somewhere safe beforehand.

So, he ordered Shizuna to find a good place to live in Casalia.

“Why me...”

“Because it’d be bad for me to go.”

Thinking about her safety on the way, there were no problems with Shizuna’s skill.

Above all, Shizuna was liked by Ria.

Hoping for his family to have success in life as an aristocrat, he presented the beautiful damsel to an influential person.

Vargas would actually hold out his beautiful daughter to an influential person himself.

“I didn’t think my father was a person like that!”

“Don’t say that. Even if you say that, Ria is a woman. It’s not like I’m selling you to a lecherous noble.”

Though Shizuna wore a look of despair, her mother and younger brothers’ futures were serious, so she would go with Ria.

Additionally, she was shouldering the safety of the other members of Thunder Fangs’ families. She couldn’t run away.

“Foremost, aren’t you happy that such a beautiful girl is wooing you?”

“I’m not happy! Aren’t I a woman!?”

“From my point of view, you look like you are on close terms.”

Seeing Vargas incline his head with a sigh, something came to Serge’s mind.

This Oyaji... has some accomplishments in yuri.

At any rate, Shizuna joined as a travelling companion.

The group was aiming for Labyrinth City for now. To trade for important goods and gather information.

From there, they would head to Ogre Village and go around planning with its surrounding villages.

... And then, part with Maal.

That was the promise.

When she bought Maal, it was to explore labyrinths. In that sense, with Shar scouting the Dark Labyrinth, Maal's role had ended.

Still, when they explored the labyrinth together, more than her fighting strength, Ria genuinely needed her.

Under a travelling sky, swaying back and forth on Matsukaze's back, Ria was a little melancholic.

She sometimes looked at Matsukaze, wondering if he sympathized with her feelings.

"It's alright. There's no way I'd choose my own selfishness over Maal's happiness."

She stroked Matsukaze's nape. Right, good-byes were simply a part of life.

"You'll stay with me for a while. In the future, I'll look for a lot of cute brides for you."

Matsukaze's kids. They would definitely be wise and strong. Then she would get on his back and go travelling again.

Ria was being uncharacteristically solemn.

The sun would go down before long.

East from the Dark Labyrinth, there was a single group in the mountains on the boundary of the permafrost.

There were mainly a lot of cat beastkin, but there were various races. Looking around, there were all kinds of nimble races.

Standing in the vanguard was a single beautiful girl with her arms crossed.

“I’ve arrived.”

“Ah, you saved me.”

Confronting the young girl was a silver haired dark elf.

No, this one’s skin color had changed to white.

Though it was a precaution against being found when in human areas, the beastkin here couldn’t recognize this dark elf as Ray.

“So, can you do it?”

“Yeah, I can. Thank you.”

“What are you saying? Don’t be like that.”

The girl’s said it in a natural manner.

She was her childhood friend. They had the same godparent, growing up as sisters. But their positions now were different.

“His Majesyt told me to assist.”

In truth, she had come here to plead.

“Besides, wouldn’t it be hard to command these children by yourself?”

“Certainly, you’ve saved me.”

In front of Ray was a little girl. Of course, her age didn’t match her looks.

Possibly a race that was a closer existence to immortality than dark elves.

A Vampire.

Flaxen hair, blue eyes. You could see sharp fangs poking out from her pink lips. Her skin was pale, oozing a bewitching feeling.

“So, who should I kill?”

“No, wait.”

This vampire Ohime-sama, unlike her appearance, was a battle maniac.

“We guide humans from the other side. Our race lives in darkness, you know.”

Though she was good at stealthy work, destructive actions were basically her strong point.

“It’s fine if I just charm them. Well, affected by my charm? Almost all men fall madly in love you know?”

“His Majesty isn’t affected by it.”

“You’re noisy!”

Played around on Ray’s palm, there seemed to be a gap in mental age.

Her followers behind her were also nodding in agreement.

“Besides, the most important thing to be careful of... it’s a woman.”

“Ah, that so? That’s a relief. I didn’t want to sip some dirty man’s blood.”

The vampire moved behind Ray and looked at her back.

She tried to put her fangs on the nape of her neck.

“Oi, Asuka.”

Easily, she pushed her away with her hand.

“Sorry, sorry. I was just kidding.”

The vampire was waving her hands and smiling, but Ray understood she was half serious.

“Really, cut that out. I want to be good friends with you.”

“Excuse me. I only like His Majesty.”

Ray smiled at her remark. It certainly wasn’t a lie. Excepting the Demon King that was her lord and godparent, she hadn’t shown interest in other men. She always drank the blood of women.

Right, this was the Demon General who held the nickname [Shiver], Asuka Augustoria.

More than homosexual, she was bisexual.

*

Dark Labyrinth Volume End

Credits

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